JOHN PERCYFIELD

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By C. Hanford Henderson.

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The Anatomy of Cheerfulness

BY

C. HANFORD HENDERSON

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NINTH IMPRESSION

TO CHARLOTTE WITH

MARGARET'S PERMISSION

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JOHN PERCYFIELD

CHAPTER I

THE CHÂTEAU DE BEAU-RIVAGE

It is with no little satisfaction, I confess, that for the past four months I have been writing "Château de Beau-Rivage" at the top of my letters to Charlotte. Charlotte, you must know, is my younger sister, to whom I write about everything that happens to me. She is altogether the most charming little sister that ever a man had, a very proper and sedate young lady when occasion demands; but at heart a jolly youngster, a *camarade* of the first order. I suppose that 's what Frederic thought, the villain, when he came along and married her.

The Château is delightful. It is not that the establishment is elegant. On the contrary, it is a great, bare place that might almost be considered uncomfortable by those who love upholstery. But it has a charm about it that you don't get with newer buildings. The charm has been gathering at the Château for upwards of four hundred years. Things that do improve with age seem to improve prodigiously. I wonder how it was with Methuselah. If he got better and better

each year, he must have been uncommonly civil before the end came. But it is n't that way with my aunt Percyfield. Perhaps she has n't started yet.

I often feel grateful to the old duke of Savoy who took it upon himself to build the Château, and selected this particular spot for the building of it. I can fancy that in his day the immediate neighborhood was something quite different from what it is now. Where I see fields and vineyards, rambling granges and stiff new villas, the old duke probably saw an almost uninterrupted forest. I would give him all the villas and welcome. In place of the hard, macadamized road, where the Châtelaine and I go spinning along on our wheels, there was probably a rough forest path, where the duke's horse had to pick careful way of a dark night, and where he himself had to grasp both sword and reins. I like to fancy that the old garden was also planned by the duke, and that the stately Lombardy poplars which are now our special pride and delight — or, perhaps, their ancestors — may have been set out at his bidding. I picture them as sheltering a suitable promenade for the morning walk of the duke's young wife, the lovely Margherita.

But however different the immediate surroundings may have been, the great features remain the same. There was the same turquoise-blue lake; the same range of Juras opposite; the same bold Voirons and Salève; the same eternal whiteness of Mont Blanc; the same deep blue sky, and the same possible heaven beyond it. These things have not changed, though I

dare say we look at them all with such modern eyes, such enlightened eyes, that we gather a totally different impression from the one made on the old duke when he first settled upon this site for his Château and mine. I suppose, in his pride, he looked forward to a long succession of little dukes of Savoy, and did not foresee democracy and the installation of an American in the best room of the Château. But, dear me, how could he? America was then only a name, a place for young blood to go and work off some of its heat, and about as interesting, doubtless, to the old duke as Matabeleland is to us. I will warrant that Charlotte does not even know where the latter is, if she *has* attended lectures at Bryn Mawr.

And the city was there, over across the lake, sedate, brave Geneva, with its stirring history present and to come — a much smaller city, of course, but still large enough to send its cheery lights across the water of an evening to him as it does even yet to me. And there was the same pure, intoxicating air and the same splendid, warm sunshine.

I cannot help wondering if the old duke were as happy here as I am, and if he loved the sweet, young wife with half the ardor that I love Margaret.

I am glad he was not a stern old Calvinist, given to reforming Unitarians and Jews by sending them straight home to their Maker. I prefer to think of him as a gentle soul, loving God and the neighbor and not too curious about the heart's inner beliefs.

I think it was Ruskin — and Charlotte will know

better if I am wrong — who said that a house is not interesting until it is five hundred years old. I am as fond of Ruskin as Charlotte is, but I do think that he went in a bit for exaggeration. It gives one a curious, jolty feeling to read "Unto This Last," or "Fors Clavigera," or "The Eagle's Nest," immediately after some writer of more precise vocabulary, such as John Stuart Mill. It catches the breath, as if one's mare had cleared a wider ditch than usual, or taken a five-rail fence. And if you don't know what this sensation is, you have still something to live for. I have calculated — by methods which might not pass muster at the American Association — that forty per cent. of what Ruskin says is true, and that sixty per cent., to put it gently, is somewhat beyond the mark. And yet I must add that the forty per cent. is so very true, so vitally true, that it has given me a greater uplift than the unadulterated truth of more precise writers. I have noticed the same thing in people. I know a woman whose "facts" I always scrutinize and never quote, but who has told me more truth than ever I got out of the "Public Ledger."

Cutting down Mr. Ruskin's figures at the rate I have hit upon, it would seem that a building two hundred years old may be interesting, and that would make my Château doubly interesting. It is good for as many more years. I often look at its solid walls and towers, and think that it will long outlive many of the smart-looking houses that I have been more luxurious in and much less satisfied with in America.

The Château calls out a deal of reverence on my part. To have withstood time and tide for four centuries, and to have come out of it so erect, so beautiful, so sweet and integral a part of the dear mother earth, is no small accomplishment. Charlotte need not laugh and twit me with being sentimental, for it is a precious sight better than she and I will ever do. And then Charlotte herself lives in a pressed-brick front on Walnut Street. So I know well what her laughter means. It means sour grapes.

The straight, macadamized road that runs from the lower village to the neighboring estate of Monsieur du Chêne, and then turns at right angles under those splendid old beech trees up to the grande route to Duvaine, passes back of the Château and really very near it, but the greenery is so thick that in summer time, at least, you might go up and down the road a dozen times and never know that the Château was there. I like this nearness and remoteness. It is like a friend whose hand you may take any day, but the inner recesses of whose spirit you may only discover with friendly seeking. It is so with Margaret.

In the case of the Château, the hand held out to the public is a shabby wooden gate, opening directly on to the highway. The path leading down to the Château is trim and well kept. It is covered with little pebbles about the size of a robin's egg, and if the soles of your shoes are rather thin, as American soles are apt to be, you will likely walk as if you were treading on eggs. We who live at the Château wear such heavy

shoes that the most Cinderella-like step can be heard from one end of the great drawing-room to the other.

The path winds through the greenery, and lands you, I had almost said precipitates you, so sudden is it, at one side of the courtyard. The courtyard is also paved with robin's-egg pebbles, and is inclosed on three sides by the Château itself, and on the fourth by the tangled wall of greenery which separates it from the road. The courtyard is oblong, with the wings of the Château forming its shorter ends, and the main building and the greenery its longer sides. It always seems to me very free and open, but this must be due to the roof of blue sky, for, in reality, the courtyard is very much inclosed. Besides a little wicket gate, leading off to some miscellaneous buildings whose original usefulness has long since been forgotten, there are but two openings from the courtyard, the one in the greenery that admits the path, and a splendid archway that passes under the centre of the main Château, and leads to the beautiful old garden beyond, and to the still more beautiful Lac Léman.

It is a picture to look through this archway of a sunny afternoon, and to see the coat of many colors, which nature, like Joseph, seems always to be wearing. There are roses and great dahlias, and chrysanthemums of every hue. There are cropped sycamores guarding the paths like so many giant umbrellas, their leaves all shades of golden brown and yellow,

vivid green and autumnal scarlet, veritable umbrellas of Cashmir. There are rows and rows of Lombardy poplars, full of years, but still erect as sentinels, with their gray-green leaves rustling and shining in the sunny air, their trunks made emerald by the luxuriant encircling ivy. There is the quiet, land-locked pool into whose clear waters one would so like to plunge in spite of its being October. Then beyond, there is a wall, and over that another world of beauty, the bluest of lakes, as blue as Charlotte's eyes, and quite as likely to have unwary youths a-drowning in it. Now it is a sea of cobalt, sparkling and glistening in the sun. Across the lake there is the gay parterre of the Swiss coast, the Château where Madame de Staël, with doubtful taste, used to pine for Paris, and back of it all, the purpling gray of the Juras, stretching away in great earth-curves from the Dôle to the unknown east, and the unknown west. Above, there is the sky, a paler blue than the lake, but impenetrably deeper, and flecked now with foamy clouds.

It is a garden full of resources. One can never exhaust it, for different corners of it respond to different moods, and so one's explorations seem never to come quite to an end. When I am tired of the formal alleys where my duke and lady used to walk, I have the orchard, with its thick carpet of green grass, or I can cross one of the stone bridges over the pool, and wander along the shore of the lake. There it is different every day: sometimes a glassy mirror, full of reflections and of sheen; sometimes a sparkling sea

of color, with the sunbeams scattered riotously; sometimes cold and gray, with the white caps rolling threateningly; but always different, and whether riotous or placid, sunny or grave, full of an undeniable attraction all its own. To live near anything so big and alive, so rich in moods and possibilities, as a lake or a solitary mountain, is to come to love it profoundly. It is different with a range of mountains. One has a neighborly feeling for them, can even grow very fond of them, but never quite fall in love with them. It would be like falling in love with a whole family. I feel that way about the Juras opposite. I should miss them sadly if some morning they failed to emerge from their purple mist, and I knew that they had gone, but I should not be entirely desolated. The lake, however, is an individual, and I love it.

There are people who remind me of mountain ranges, they are so big and so broad and so admirable. They seem to sum up in their own person the qualities of a whole race. I always admire them tremendously, and even think at a distance that I should like to imitate them, but I never love them. It is the unique people, the Monadnocks, the Grandfather Mountains, the Tacomas, the Mont Blancs, even the Ætnas, that take my heart.

I always think of Margaret in comparison with the Jungfrau, not the Jungfrau when it is veiled in mist, or even when its snowy bosom stands out cold and white against the impenetrable blue, but the Jungfrau when it is touched by the late afternoon sun, and is

bathed in rosy light, — something warm, palpitating, individual, even in a way inaccessible, — for those we love must have reserves which even the beloved one may hardly penetrate.

I was walking the other morning in the shrubbery that skirts the lake, when I caught sight of a half-hidden path which I had never noticed before. It was only another of the surprises with which this wonderful garden is full. I followed the path, brushing aside the detaining hands that the bushes put forth on all sides, and stooping where the stouter branches were too low for the high head that I am always obliged to carry. I had all the joy of the discoverer. My little path seemed bent on mystery, for it wound in and out in all sorts of curves and tangents, but finally it led me to the most perfect morsel of a summer house, half overhanging the water, and half buried in the greenery. It was very, very old, and of curious, foreign workmanship, quite unlike anything in the Château itself. The marble was stained with moss and lichen, and all its outlines were so softened by time that it seemed almost a part of Nature. The carving had grown indistinct, but here and there I could trace the faint semblance of quaint flowers, and little loves were hovering in the midst of them, like bridal butterflies. What surprised me most was that there was also a marble seat extending along the front side of the summer house, for any one who sat there must needs turn his back on the one possible outlook. The workmanship was evidently Italian, and this arrangement may

have been purely for symmetry; the Italians, you know, are great on symmetry.

I sat down in my little summer house, facing the lake, and immensely pleased to have found such a splendid retreat. But the seat opposite still puzzled me. I got up and sat down on it, to see if that would give me any idea. You may call me fanciful, if you please to, but it solved the mystery. It was here the duke sat, and Margherita sat opposite to him. She looked at the beautiful view, and he looked at her, as any lover would. It was a pretty compliment. I liked the fancy, and often I came to the summer house and sat thus, picturing the dear Margaret opposite to me.

Had the season been warmer, I think I should have lived in the garden, even slept there, out under the friendly stars, and in the company of the eternal mountains; but the summer was not warm, and now the autumn winds are astir. There are rainy spells, and nights and days which are already cold. But I am not in a fault-finding mood, for, in reality, the Château is as dear to me as is the old garden.

There are no entrances to the Château, save from the courtyard, but here you have your choice of half a dozen. A high wall in place of the greenery on the open side of the courtyard would have converted the Château into a respectable fortress. I rather fancy that in its early years such a wall existed, or, indeed, even a line of buildings, similar to what we now call the main château, thus closing in the courtyard com-

pletely. There are signs of such a structure, and one can still trace the grooves in the sides of the archway where stout oaken doors once shut out unwelcome visitors. Except on the courtyard side, there are no openings whatever through the thick stone walls of the lower story of the Château. In fact, this lower story hardly counts. It is cellar, lumber room, woodshed, vegetable storehouse, whatever you please, — even in the north wing a comfortable stable for Coco, the pony. The living rooms are all upstairs, on the first floor. It was safer in the old days to be a little out of reach, and to have the windows a bit above the ground. Otherwise the duke might have slept too well and never wakened more to sit again with Margherita in the Italian summer house.

It is rather a shock to remember that life in those days was so constantly on the defensive. I used to fancy, as a little fellow, that the people could never have slept well with precaution in the very air. But one gets used to it, I suppose, somewhat as one does when one goes where there are rattlesnakes. A few get bitten, but the majority escape, and one always expects to belong to the majority. And then, for that matter, we have only got one step beyond those old dukes of Savoy. They trusted their households, and distrusted their immediate neighbors. We trust our household and our immediate neighbors, and distrust our distant ones, that is, other nations. We are still on the defensive. Christian intercourse between nations, common decency and honesty, have only been set up as a

truce, not as a permanent arrangement. One feels that over here. The peace society may propose to have windows on the ground floor, but even England and America do not take the proposition seriously, and his majesty of Germany twirls his fierce-looking mustaches, puts on another uniform, and says it 's all baby talk. Well, well, perhaps morality will sometime hold, even among nations. Four hundred years from now, — and four hundred years are a small matter to us geologists, — I venture to say that our descendants will look with as much surprise and horror upon the military savagery of the old days, that is, our present semi-civilized days, as we do upon the guarded bedroom of the late dukes of Savoy. I wonder what these same descendants will think of all our locks and keys. They will take us for a mighty dishonest crowd, or else fancy that the March winds were uncommonly strong.

As a matter of daily comfort, I like this habit of living upstairs on the first floor. One has more light and more air, and a better outlook. It is drier, too, and sunnier, and in me, at least, it produces a certain elation to be some little distance above the turf. You must not think that I shall be vexed and try to beg off when the time comes for me to be put under it, — not a bit of it, — but meanwhile I want to be as luxuriantly alive as possible, with the reddest sort of red blood in the blue Percyfield veins.

There are so many apartments in the Château that we hardly use a quarter of them. Indeed, our life

centres about the old south tower, the one you reach from the staircase at the left-hand corner of the court-yard. On the first floor of the tower there are two large apartments, the dining-room and the drawing-room. They are ranged side by side, and both have great windows looking toward the south. The drawing-room is the larger, for it has no hallway taken off. It stretches across the entire west face of the tower, and has a large double window looking out on the lake and on the sunset. It is a room full of interest. It is so large that almost a dozen groups could talk quietly without disturbing one another. The walls are covered with very old-fashioned green brocade, all except the space over the mantel, and that is in intricate white plaster work. The furniture is mostly red, but there are delightful old chairs whose original color it would be difficult to guess. Now that the room is in its winter dress, with dark red hangings at the windows, and warm rugs covering the greater part of the dark oak floor, it is a very cosy place indeed. Charlotte, herself, could not find in all Philadelphia a more beautiful room in which to hold her Sunday evening salon. Since the days at Bryn Mawr, this little sister of mine has taken to having a salon, and the droll part is that she manages it well. One may find some pretty big fish a-swimming in those softly lighted waters.

Of course this old drawing-room is shabby, like all the rest of the Château, and a little out at the elbows. But it is the sort of shabbiness that means no loss of

self-respect, and it only serves to endear the room all the more.

There is no door between the drawing-room and the dining-room. Where the rooms are large enough to stand such isolation, I much like the arrangement, for it gives each room more individuality. Our American plan of throwing all the living rooms into one by sliding-doors and folding-doors and archways and the like, sounds very jolly, but in reality it makes you live pretty much in a heap, and when the door-bell rings there is always such a scurrying with the portières and screens.

The dining-room is a very severe apartment, and would never in the world be acceptable in that portion of my own city where the newly rich are wont to congregate. But I like its bareness and its spaciousness. One can fill one's lungs without expecting the closet-doors to fly open to relieve the vacuum. Everything is generous, and everything has about it the beauty of entire usableness. The bare deal floor bears witness to its own sweet cleanliness. The big sofa over in the corner, covered with turkey-red cotton, was meant to sit on, rest on, lounge on, lie on, and cannot by any amount of hard usage be made to appear other than sound and decorous. The large, inclosed sideboard in another corner shows through its glass doors a brave array of old china that would make Charlotte fairly green with envy. The large windows in the south end of the room, and the smaller one in the eastern corner, are all double, — for fuel is dear in

Switzerland, — and just now the spaces between the casements are gay with red geraniums and Japanese chrysanthemums. Then there is a great stone fireplace, quite big enough to roast a whole ox, and in design sufficiently quaint and irregular to defy imitation. Over the fireplace there is a correspondingly big picture, so old that no one remembers who painted it. It represents two long wooden tables, on which are spread out in painful orderliness every variety of fish ever caught in the blue waters of Lac Léman, — and the list is a long one. They are evidently done by a man who was something of an Izaak Walton. Indeed, it is quite a remarkable picture, in a zoölogical way. The stolid little boy who stands in one corner of the picture looks as cold-blooded as the fishes.

I sit at table directly opposite this picture, and I never look at it without thinking of Holland. It is just the sort of thing those old Dutch masters delighted in, — that is, when they allowed their imagination such wild flight. Usually they were too busy painting the homely women managers of orphan asylums, or the bibulous members of some long forgotten guild. If these masters had only used their tremendous power in painting sweet children and young motherhood, if they had only given us something that we could love! For myself, I prefer Madonnas and juicy babies floating in clouds of rose and old gold, subjects that Murillo and Raffaelle delight in, things that are eternally beautiful. Of course you do not see these things in the street, or on 'change, but the worse for you

that you do not. The mission of art is higher. It is to supplement God, and to add new beauties to the creation, not to photograph ugly things and then ask your admiration because the photographing is well done.

There is a fine old clock in the corner of the dining-room that might have served for the original of Longfellow's "Clock on the Stairs," for it seems to be forever saying, *Toujours, jamais ; jamais, toujours.* I never see these old grandfather clocks without a touch of envy. We have a fine one out at Uplands, but none at all in the town house. My grandfather Marston's will some day be mine, but now it belongs to a dear old lady whom I love so much better than all the clocks in the world that I shall come into possession sorrowfully. So I designed a clock myself. It had a curious, enameled face with cabalistic characters wrought into the background, and a case made of the darkest mahogany. On the door in quaint carved letters were the words, *Toujours, jamais ; jamais, toujours.* But the clock was never built, and this is the way it happened. I was calling, soon after I finished the design, on my professor of engineering. It was twilight, and beyond finding myself a chair, I could see little of the contents of the drawing-room. Presently the professor came down, and stopped a moment in the hall to turn on the electric light. There in the corner opposite to me stood my identical clock, enameled dial, mahogany case, even the words on the door, except that they were painted instead of being carved.

It made me feel queer. Of course I asked at once where the clock came from and found that the professor had built the case himself and had had the works made at the clock factory up at Lancaster. I claimed the whole thing as mine, but the professor never acknowledged my claim. When I went home the next vacation, I tore up my design. I felt that I no longer owned it. Instead, I had an elaborate sun-dial built in the garden, and on it I put this motto: "I count only those hours which are serene." It 's a capital motto. If I remember rightly, it is taken from an old dial near Venice. I got it out of Hazlitt's "Essays."

Our clock at the Château has the steadiness of age, and we march very promptly to its orders. Nine o'clock finds us drinking morning coffee; twelve, taking luncheon; four, drinking afternoon tea, and seven at dinner. It is the quiet, informal life of a generous old country house. We do not dress, even for dinner. We come to the table in sack coat or riding suit, as the hour happens to find us. We have but two formalities, — we always knock at the dining-room door, and we always have candles at dinner.

The next floor of the old south tower contains my own room. It is an enormous place, I should say at least twenty by thirty feet, and a ceiling high enough to be vague. The room is so big, that even a tall man like myself has somewhat the feeling of camping out in it. The particular feature in the room is the great south window. When the casements are thrown open, it is like being in an Italian loggia. And what a

view! If Charlotte could only see it. Near at hand is the old orchard. But I am up so high that I can only see the very treetops. In the spring time, when the apple blossoms are out in full force, it must be like heaven. The old garden stretches out below me like a map. Beyond the treetops, there are a few villas and some thickly planted vineyards; then a wooded slope, far enough off to have its green touched with blue, and back of that, against the southern sky, the blue-gray heights of Salève. To the right is the lake, and across its waters the brave city of Geneva, the city of the Reformation. In the daytime, I can see its bristling Protestant spires pointing heavenward with even more of certitude than St. Peter's dome at Rome. At night, the rows of lights shine out across the waters like the very crown of the faithful. When I have put my own lamp out, — and this seldom happens until after midnight, — these flashing lights of Geneva carry me any amount of good cheer.

If I stick my head out of the window of a morning, as I generally do, I see still further to the right the long dark line of the Juras. Just now they have a sprinkling of snow on them, and dark, trailing clouds hide their summits. But best of all, to the extreme left, I can see the immense whiteness of Mt. Blanc, and that always gives me a great uplift.

What I marvel at most is that such beauty as this could have produced Monsieur Jean Calvin. He must have stopped at home whenever the sun shone and gone abroad only in gray weather. Then, indeed, the

cloud-covered mountains do look like the Hebrew prophets of denunciation. Furthermore, Monsieur Calvin was a lawyer, and that explains a great deal. The lawyers do have a way of getting things twisted. My friend the economist meant to be a lawyer, but he went to Halle, and like every one who goes to Halle and listens to Herr Conrad he came home an economist. But he told me that for some months afterwards he never saw a lawyer without patting himself on the back and saying, "God be thanked." And then I always remember that agreeable old archbishop, who used occasionally to come and dine with my grandfather Percyfield. The archbishop was much sought after in the dinner way by gentlemen who had made fat fortunes in railways. On one of these occasions an attorney, of more than Philadelphia reputation, said by way of pleasantry, "Your grace will naturally give such agreeable hosts free passes to heaven." "On the contrary," said the archbishop affably, "I shall not like to separate them from their counsel." This story always pleased my grandfather Percyfield mightily. I am afraid it would have shocked my grandfather Marston.

When the sun shines, my great south window is a blaze of glory, and speaks always of that love which is above all law, — the law which Monsieur Calvin too much emphasized, and the love which he too much ignored.

Then I have an east window. It is a little affair, with full three feet of window-sill. I like to think

that this room of mine was perhaps the bridal chamber of the duke and duchess, and that to this little window Margherita and her child came of a morning to taste the early sunshine. I picture them seated on the broad, low window-sill, the sun turning the boy's golden hair into an aureole of glory, and the tender mother-love in the face of Margherita making her look like one of Murillo's Madonnas. And then I fall to thinking of my own Margaret, and wondering whether I shall ever find her.

But this big apartment in the south tower of the old Château de Beau-Rivage is more than a mere play-room for the fancy. It is a place to work, and the tools are very much in evidence, — the generous writing-table, the big armchair, the scattered manuscripts, the motley collection of pens and pencils, the still unspoiled stacks of paper. It is a studio, but without the smell of paint and turpentine, and it has been consecrated to a year of apprenticeship. The master craftsmen are on the book-shelf.

Charlotte does not altogether like this fiction of mine in calling myself an artist: she says it 's presumptuous. But really it is not, for there are artists *and* artists, and the name tells simply what one would be if one could. But I told Charlotte, by way of consolation, that whatever came of the experiment, the year would certainly be a success, for I am over here for the indeterminate good. People who are willing to seek this are never defeated. I have noticed that when one is hunting a particular sort of sugar-

plum, one often gets another, even better and sweeter, but never knows it, because the mind is so determined on the first. It was Saul, was it not, who went hunting for his father's asses and found a kingdom? There is a great deal to be said for this doctrine of the indeterminate good. But my philosophy made less impression on Charlotte than it should have done, considering that she has read Hegel in the original. Perhaps it was not paradoxical enough for her to understand. A philosopher must not be too lucid if he wants to have followers. Next time I shall put my wisdom into a thicker cover. Then perhaps Charlotte will take to it.

At any rate I came away. I thought that Charlotte could well spare me, now that she has the devoted Frederic, but it was a tearful lady who saw the gangplank pulled in from a big steamer one lovely morning last June, and as for myself, I confess that my heart was in my throat, and seemed to be conspiring with my Adam's-apple to choke me quite. But it is well that I said what I did about indefinite results, for after all, it *was* the unexpected that happened.

CHAPTER II

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Society at the Château is cosmopolitan. We represent five countries. But it is nearly always so in Switzerland. When Charlotte and I were studying at Zürich, we thought it the meeting place of the nations. The economist warned us that we should find it the headquarters of the educated malcontents of Europe, and in truth we saw so many queer-looking people that we judged some of them, at least, to be discontented; we had less chance to know whether they were educated.

But Geneva is apparently the rendezvous of the contented ones, or at least the Château de Beau-Rivage is.

The Châtelaine represents Switzerland, and does it admirably. She is a gentlewoman of an ancient and honorable family. You may see her coat-of-arms, done in color, hanging between the great south windows of the dining-room. The Châtelaine is the last of her family, and when she dies, — which heaven grant may not be for many years to come, — the Château must pass into less accustomed and less reverent hands. I am a poor judge of age, but I should say that the Châtelaine is over forty. Her hair is silver-gray, and singularly abundant. She wears it combed back from

her forehead in loose curves. Her face and eyes have all the appearance of youth, and her trim figure is almost girlish. She is rather short, and correspondingly slender. When she stands alongside of her majestic neighbor of Mon Bijou, you realize that the Châtelaine is small, but taken alone, she allows no such impression. Her shoulders are thrown well back, the head held high, and her carriage is absolutely erect and dignified. She always dresses well, which is no small merit in a woman, gentle or otherwise. Usually she wears either dark green or purple, and both colors go excellently with her magnificent gray hair. Her cheeks have the high color of good health. She agrees with me that it is an immoral thing to be ill. She commonly wears no ornaments, a temperance which I much like, but on special occasions, such as the dinner party she gave me on my birthday, she hangs an old family jewel about her neck, a dark-red stone set around with pearls. Against the purple velvet of her waist, the old jewel flashes back the concentrated pride of generations of high-spirited châtelaines. If they were all like our dear little mademoiselle, so gentle, so brave, so altogether kind, they may well have been proud of themselves, and one cannot but feel sad that so honorable and worthy a house has come to the end of its career. I can well imagine that in her youth the Châtelaine had many admirers, perhaps lost a lover by death, and refused to make the loss good. Back of her serene, self-contained face are many possibilities. There seems to hang about her

person the same richness of experience that permeates the old Château. It was her great-grandfather several times removed, Monsieur Hyacinthe de Candolle, who acquired the Château from the duke of Savoy, when the duke finally moved to another of his estates. The Châtelaine has survived her distinguished brother, and the beautiful sister who was all spirit and all fire. This little woman, with the erect carriage, begotten of generations of upright ancestors, is in reality a grand figure quite worthy to be the mistress of so charming an old château.

Such is our good hostess. She is up early in the morning. She goes to bed late at night. She is forever occupied without being busy.

It is a great gift, that of being occupied without being busy. I have a friend at home, Graham Harlowe, who is forever busy without being occupied. When I go to see him I am always shown directly upstairs to his den, and there the poor youth sits, half buried in papers and rubbish of all sorts, up to his ears in work, and never accomplishing anything. I believe he does produce a sonnet once in three years, the sort that makes us so much the poorer. I think he calls himself a student of comparative literature, but Charlotte once got sight of the stuff on his table, — obsolete, juiceless stuff it was, — and ever since then she has dubbed him the student of comparatively poor literature. Charlotte has not my grandfather Percyfield's objection to puns. Harlowe never rises when I enter. He always holds out his hand and says,

"Ah, Percyfield, so glad to see you. Won't you sit down, and just excuse me for a minute till I finish looking up this reference." I do sit down, and I seldom wait less than ten minutes. But all the same, I owe Harlowe my thanks for this, that since I have known him — and we were at college together — I have never myself been busy. Poor Mr. Miller, who is always tired, and the robust-looking Mrs. Coddington, who is always ill, have done me a similar good turn. It is at least something to make clear to people how *not* to do it.

Besides myself, there are three other pensionnaires, loyal subjects of his majesty of Great Britain and Ireland, and as they hail each from one of the home countries, I call them collectively the United Kingdom.

Ireland is a fragile old gentlewoman, an aristocrat to the backbone, and looking for all the world like a lost rose leaf from Versailles, or like one of those quaint Watteau figures on the old painted fan that used to belong to my grandmother Percyfield, and that Charlotte now carries so gayly to the German opera. Ireland has perfectly white hair, which she, or her maid, gathers into a great roll on the top of her head, after the pompadour manner. Her skin is fair and delicate without a trace of color, while her eyes are a faded blue. This always gives pathos to a face in spite of the high-born curve of the lids. Ireland apparently disapproves of modern gowns. She wears old-fashioned flowered silks that were brand new

at least half a century ago. They are trimmed with their original embroidered edgings, and have puffed sleeves. Some are a little low in the neck, and with these Ireland wears a triple string of pearls around her throat, and a corresponding aigrette in her hair. It goes without saying that in the house she wears low-cut, high-heeled slippers. You must not suppose for a moment that I would have our gentle Countess one whit different from what she is. On the contrary, I should quite resent it if she pored over the cockney fashion paper that Scotland reads so religiously every week, and shaped her gowns accordingly. Half Ireland's charm would be gone. As she is, I find her dainty, delicious, like a bit of old Dresden china, or, as I said before, like my grandmother Percyfield's painted fan, the one that was given to her by no less a person than Mr. Madison himself.

And Ireland, like most Irish gentlewomen, speaks French to perfection. She has quite the Parisian accent and intonation. It has something mellow and rare about it, like well-ripened fruit or old vintage wine. Indeed it seems to fit her better than does her native tongue. She is very kind, too, in helping others out, when the subjunctive mood or the position of the pronoun threatens disaster.

England is Ireland's devoted friend, and is built on a much more rugged model. The two women supplement each other admirably. It is plain to see that England fairly worships Ireland's fragile daintiness; and equally plain that Ireland looks upon England as

a marvel of womanly strength. If I wrote that to Charlotte, she would say in her delightful, mocking way, "How true it is, Kin, that we are apt to like what we ourselves lack. Don't you just love witty people?" Charlotte can say the most outrageous things in the very sweetest manner. Once when she was tired and wanted me to repeat some poetry to her, I tried to beg off by reminding her that I only knew one old piece, the Legend Beautiful, and added gallantly that I did not want to bore her, to which she murmured, "But you can't help it, you know, Kin, so go right on." I wonder how Frederic ever managed to propose. He has courage.

As I was saying, England is rugged. She has a high color, jet black hair, and a deep voice that sounds almost like a man's. When she speaks, we all stop and listen. She is one of those masterful women to whom one assumes, quite unconsciously, a distinct manner. I always say, "Yes, Madame," "No, Madame," "Do you think so, Madame?" much, I suppose, as I should have talked to Delphi, had the oracle deigned to notice me. Now with Ireland, it is quite different. I never say "Madame" to her. I always speak with a certain gentle deference, as one would to a sweet child, and quite by instinct, I lower my voice by a full half tone. I find myself, too, using old-fashioned phrases. I should never think of quoting her any of Charlotte's college slang, any more than I should think of wearing a dress suit to church. I even purr softly after her own manner, and say the most

obvious platitudes as if they were brand new discoveries and worth a struggle with the idiomatic vagaries of the French tongue.

With England I talk politics. But though I am so very respectful before this aggressive English matron, I do not hesitate to deny every single item in her political creed. She is a typical islander, provincial as they come, and even your educated Englishman can be very provincial. Furthermore, she is an imperialist of the imperialists. She takes great comfort out of her creed. After the heavenly hosts, she adores the late queen and the royal family, even to the third and fourth generation. England softens her voice when she mentions any one of them, until it sounds quite reverential, and she is pretty sure to add some endearing adjective. It is "Our dear queen," "Our beautiful princess," "Our noble prince."

I doubt not that kings and queens may have served some wise purpose, for the ways of Providence *are* inscrutable, but I do think they have had their day. And of all stupid things, it must be the stupidest to be one of them. They have pretty much given up the inconvenience of crowns and ermine, except when they have their pictures taken, but the interminable red tape, from morning till night, from night till morning, must be simply dreadful. When I say these things to England, she does not even reply. She looks at me with quiet pity.

England's next object of worship is the Anglo-Saxon race. I think myself that it is a pretty fine race that

can produce Mr. Washington, and Mr. Lincoln, and my grandfather Percyfield. But where we cross swords, England and I, is as regards their mission, the direction in which this superiority ought to spend itself. I am all for self-conquest, — as indeed, how could a disciple of Mr. Emerson be otherwise? — for perfecting ourselves, our family life, our institutions, for dazzling and conquering the rest of the world by the irresistible force of our example. I cannot believe, myself, in the white man's burden. It seems to me like pulling the mote out of your brother's eye. I like to believe in the white man's splendid privilege of making the most he can out of himself, and of helping his yellow or black brother, without patronizing him, or robbing him, or shooting him, or even giving him cheap Testaments as a preface to several hundred per cent. profit on cheap goods. It is fine practice to cross swords with England and test my own strength and coherence. Sometimes at home I make stump speeches to Charlotte. I do not know that she always listens, but she sits patiently before the fire, while I stride up and down the long drawing-room at Uplands. "This slumming business is all wrong," I say to her, "whether it be local or national. It is an impertinence to interfere with other people's affairs. What you want to do is to change their ideas and then their affairs will mend themselves quick enough. You put bathtubs into your model tenement houses, and your Italians and Poles find them excellent storage boxes for potatoes and cabbages.

What you want to give them is the idea of cleanliness and then a tin basin will suffice," — "you forget the water and the soap" puts in Charlotte mockingly, but I go right on, — "ideas are the open sesame, the wonder workers. And this you can impart by no artificial contact, no occasional slumming at home, no sharp bargaining and psalm-singing abroad. You must live your own sweet, natural life, just as ideal as you can make it, and then let the good contagion spread. Clear up your own spiritual vision and look to it that you see things straight and true yourself. Idealize the relations of daily life, with the cook, the waitress, the gardener, the groceryman, the boy who brings the newspaper or the telegram, with the neighbor. Be just as polite to your relatives as you are to other people. Don't read your letters at the breakfast table" — "Thanks," murmurs Charlotte. — "It will take the whole twenty-four hours to do this and the whole of life to bring the process to any degree of perfection. It is the same with nations. Let America perfect her own national life, let her be at once what she is destined to be ultimately, the very greatest nation in history. Let her be unselfish and just and generous in her dealings with other nations, and this whether they be white or yellow or black, whether they be strong or weak. That would be the modern, moral way of imitating the conquests of Alexander."

In spite of her mockery, Charlotte agrees with these ideas of mine, and really has a very clear head for politics. Only when I get on too high a horse, she

has a droll way of calling me down that I rather fancy is entirely wholesome. Miss Polyhymnia, who has an apt name for everybody, calls Charlotte the "Balance Wheel." She used to call my grandfather Percyfield "Grosspapa," which was something of a liberty with so dignified an old gentleman, but I think he rather liked it. Miss Polyhymnia has sound ideas, too, about the amenities of daily life, the "minor morals" as she calls them.

When I talk back to England in this anti-imperialistic way, she cannot deny what I say. She has read her prayer-book too carefully not to know something of the Christian religion, but she sighs the way people will when they have to do presumably with Utopians. She does not seem to have much faith in the kingdom that is to come, though she prays for it, I dare say, once or twice a day. She reminds me of a young girl who lives near Uplands. Charlotte had been thrown from her horse, and was pretty badly injured. My aunt Percyfield feared that she would die and had prayers for her recovery offered at St. David's. When Charlotte was well enough to have visitors, this young girl came to see her at once, and fairly sobbed over her. "My dear Charlotte," she cried, "I never expected to see you alive, for they prayed for your recovery in church, and they never do that unless there is no hope." England takes the ideal part of her creed in much the same way, without ever expecting it to come true, and such prayers, as every one who has tried them knows, avail absolutely

nothing. My own prayers are short, but they go straight to the great Soul of the Universe, for I myself believe in them.

I never really expect to convert England to my ideas, but we renew the contest from time to time, and I must say for her that she is a fair listener. But what can you expect of people who believe in such confounded nonsense as kings and queens.

Ideas go in bunches. Granting the right of a particular family to rule over a whole people, and it is a short step to Madame's doctrine that this particular people has the right to rule over the whole world, — if it can. I suppose one could travel the road backward. If America should ever be seriously bitten with the idea of empire, it would be a short step, I fear me, to having one man rule America. And in that event we ought to be very docile, for what we give to others we ought to be willing to accept for ourselves. Otherwise we should not be living up to the Golden Rule. And the emperor, hang him, might be as firmly convinced of his own superiority to the rest of us common men as we were of our collective superiority to other nations.

But England, like all misguided people, is obstinate. She persists in maintaining that the Anglo-Saxon mission is nothing short of world conquest. Though the poor of Edinburgh and Glasgow are the most depraved creatures in the world, unless, indeed, our own New York and Chicago poor equal them; and though it is not pleasant for a decent man or woman to go abroad in London city after ten o'clock of nights,

England still holds that it is the Anglo-Saxon mission to rule India and if possible the rest of Asia and Africa, and as many of the isles of the sea as she can gather into her drag-net. I quote Shakespeare to her, — "You yourself are much condemned to have an itching palm," — it avails not. And when I point out to her the immense human cost of this domineering imperialism, how the fresh, wholesome young Englishmen, who have sailed so bravely out of Plymouth or Southampton Bay, have come back from India or the Cape, or the uttermost parts of the world, spoiled, arrogant, with all the vices that come to the conquerors of inferior peoples, how their children lack the rosy cheeks and moral health of the home nurseries, how the greatest curse of slavery has always been on the slaveholders, then England retorts by throwing me a line of Kipling's, or by saying in her most majestic bass, "Remember, Mr. Percyfield, that my father was a colonel in the Indian service."

This stops the conversation at once, for however hot one may be in a cause, one cannot talk to a lady against her father, or even against the class to which he may have had the misfortune to belong. As the French say, it is not polite to mention a rope in the house of a man that 's been hung.

But one goes on thinking all the same, and praying that the party of Little England may in the end prevail, and that in America, by God's grace, there may never be any party but that of Little America, if such a term can be applied to anything so already colossal.

But though England's color deepens, and I forget to eat my dinner, we remain good friends, and we talk about many other things besides politics. Sometimes the conversation is even so mild as to be open to Scotland. Scotland is a young thing, a matter of eighteen or nineteen, I should say. How she ever came to be connected with Ireland and England, beyond the bond established by James First and Sixth — "Nothing wavering" — I am at a loss even to conjecture. It was several days before I saw Scotland distinctly enough to have recognized her on the road. She is an illusive sort of person. But now I never look at her without thinking of Stevenson's aunt. When Robert Louis asked her if she had been pretty as a girl, she answered, you remember, "Well, I was na exactly what ye would ha' called bonny, but I was pale, penetrating, and interesting." That is Scotland precisely, and in addition she is a most exasperating person. The bother is in her eyes. She has sleepy eyes that are half closed most of the time. Now it is a great mistake to think that people with sleepy eyes are necessarily stupid. On the contrary, they often see more than people with wide-open eyes. The most unobservant man I ever knew had great, staring, blue eyes. And then again, by shutting out a lot of nonsense, these sleepy-eyed folk sometimes get in a deal of thinking. I have reasoned all this out, and understand it perfectly, but somehow I am forever failing to apply it with Scotland. I am always making allowances for her, and expecting her to be more stupid than she is, and

then when it turns out otherwise, it is very aggravating. Scotland has a nasty habit of stopping indoors, even when the sun shines, and both the Alps and the Juras are making loud bids for one's admiration. I do not approve of Scotland at all. She writes long love letters to that bare-legged Scottish laird of hers, and pores over cockney fashion papers, and does other things equally stupid. She had much better be out doors getting a little color into her pale cheeks. I took her to task about it this evening. She is nine or ten years younger than I am, and the duties of the elder brother sometimes weigh rather heavily upon me.

At times, Scotland is so irrelevant. The other day I was talking very earnestly at the luncheon table, and talking pretty well, I think, for the Châtelaine and Ireland and England all listened attentively. I was, perhaps, a little carried away by my own eloquence, as Charlotte puts it, and talked a few moments too long. When I paused for breath, Scotland said, — very abruptly I thought, — "There was an American lady at the Château, last year, who had a little donkey with her. If one were to ride it into Geneva, what autumn fruit would one represent?" Conundrums are so trivial anyway, and this was so out of place on top of our serious talk, that none of us made any attempt to guess it. It was only for politeness' sake that I begged Scotland to tell us the answer, for it is very dismal when one's conundrums go both unguessed and unanswered. "A pear," said Scotland, innocently. I looked at her sharply, but you can

never tell with these sleepy-eyed people whether they are quizzing you or not.

England has no great sense of humor, and, afterwards, in repeating the story, I heard her say that the answer was an apple.

Poor Scotland is really too young to have come out from home. She ought to be at one of those schools for the daughters of gentlemen, that abound between London and Harrow-on-the-Hill. It must be dull for her here. She does not speak more than about two words of French. We sometimes use English at the table, so that she can understand, but commonly it is French, for England and I have a laudable desire to improve our accent, and, indeed, we can hardly afford to leave the Châtelaine out of the talk. Of course, the Châtelaine speaks English, but she is at her best in French. She has that rare gift of comradeship, and we all of us turn to her like flowers to the sun. She is a sturdy little person. For her, as for all Genevois, the central fact of history is the Reformation, and she is not a little proud that her own brave city of Geneva should have been one of its cradles. But she is not illiberal. She took me the other Sunday afternoon to a meeting of the theosophical society, where we heard Monsieur le professeur Flournoy and Monsieur le docteur Pascal disagree about the merits of a certain Madame Blavatsky.

Ireland and England have morning coffee in their own salon. The Châtelaine drinks it at some unearthly hour, and Scotland, for unaccountable reasons, prefers

to come to the *salle à manger*, so she and I must needs breakfast together. I get up with the crowing of the cock, but, like Carmen Sylva, I must add, of a cock that does not crow until eight o'clock. I am very wide awake by nine, and even Scotland opens her eyes a little wider than at other times. She is also a trifle less wicked at morning coffee. When I write this to Charlotte, I add that good communications correct evil manners, but Charlotte retorts that it is a poor reformation that won't last a whole day. As breakfast in Switzerland consists of coffee and rolls and butter and honey, there is little to interrupt conversation, and Scotland and I talk fast and furiously. It is often about books. Scotland has the most unreliable taste in literary matters of any one I ever knew. She seems to have read some very good books in her day and recommends them to me quite seriously, — books that everybody has read, and that I have virtually grown up on. I wonder what she thinks we do in America of an evening and a Sunday. Then, with the same enthusiasm, she praises the veriest trash that ever you saw, and even fetches me the books themselves so that I may be sure to read them. Some of them I flatly refuse, but others I have to swallow. I always return them with a growl. Scotland looks surprised, and says, very innocently, "And did n't you like it, Mr. Percyfield?" I half suspect that she is quizzing me, — these Scots are such canny people. But I never avoid Scotland. I take my grandfather Percyfield's view of the case, and count

her a part of my education. But I fear me that if Charlotte, my dear Balance Wheel, heard me say that, she would inform me very promptly that I was a bit of a prig.

Of late I have got into the habit of dropping into the salon of the United Kingdom, and drinking afternoon tea with them. On Sundays and Thursdays, you can buy very nice little buns up at the village, and I usually fetch a package of them as my contribution to the feast. I am really very fond of the dainty, porcelain-like Ireland, and the rugged, unregenerate England. Even Scotland is like the proverbial singed cat that my aunt Percyfield is always talking about, and is better than she looks.

The salon of the United Kingdom is in the east wing of the Château, on the south side of the courtyard, and is really a very grand apartment. In the matter of furniture it is quite the best thing that we have. Among the three of them, the United Kingdom have some splendid old rugs and draperies, and Bellagio blankets, in point of beauty quite beyond anything I have ever seen in America. When I praise the apartment, as I do involuntarily nearly every afternoon that I go into it, England says stoutly that it is the cream of the Château. But I tell her that this cannot be, for the cream always rises to the top, and that my own room, up in the south tower, is undeniably the cream. Under my banter, I am really much in earnest. I am always happiest when I am at the top of a building. Like Monsieur Souvestre, I would

be a philosopher under the eaves. At Uplands my study is a great garret, whose windows give me a splendid view of our beautiful Chester valley, and whose bare rafters make the most delightful shadows. Charlotte, the practical one, says that this taste of mine is due to the fact that I am a bit "skyey" anyway. But I notice that if it be so, she likes heaven pretty well herself, for she often comes up to my garret and sits in front of my rough stone fireplace. It was here that she told me about Frederic. There is another charm to this study of mine; it holds always select company. I admit no one that I do not like. In this way I preserve a certain atmosphere. Being at the top of the house, it is easy to exclude the less welcome guest. I never ask my aunt Percyfield up, but for that matter I rather suspect she prefers her own more conventional sitting-room on the first floor. It is worth remembering, before you grow too contrite about avoiding people who bore you, that it is just possible you may bore them.

When I mention this exclusiveness to the United Kingdom, they say that it is the same with their salon, and that I must understand why I am invited. I rise and bow, pressing my hand gallantly to my heart, but thinking the while that it would have been more subtle not to have added the last part of the remark. Many a compliment is spoiled by being made too obvious. The French have a clever way of suggesting things. The trouble is they don't always mean them. If we could keep our Anglo-Saxon honesty and mix with it

something of the Gallic subtlety, what a people we should be! If one must choose, I should always take the honesty, let it be never so blunt. But I am inclined to think that we might have both. It seems to me that Charlotte has; she is both subtle and downright. And she is so funny with it all. I remember once when my aunt Percyfield was about to scold Charlotte for some prank or other, she began her lecture by saying, "Now I don't want to be disagreeable," when Charlotte, quoting, I think, from some book she had just been reading, remarked very sweetly, "Then why, dear aunt, do violence to your inclination?" My aunt Percyfield shut her teeth very tightly together, and deigned no reply. She is rather a severe old gentlewoman.

Ireland always makes the tea, and England passes the village buns, or, these lacking, slices of bread and butter, so very thin that you can hardly catch hold of them, and when at last you do get hold of them, you are pretty sure to stick your fingers straight through the bread and get them all covered with butter. I wonder whoever originated the idea that it is the thing to cut bread in this idiotic fashion.

Scotland, although the youngest of the party, passes nothing, — hardly the time of day, — but establishes herself on a sofa in a distant corner of the room, and scarcely says a word, except to beg that her tea shall be made very strong. But for myself, I take my tea hot and very weak, for I hold with the orientals that a delicate flavor is better than a rank one, violets than onions.

Ireland's tea equipage is stunning, — a quaint silver samovar that I think she told me she picked up at Prague. But it is not quite so quaint as one that my friend Mrs. Lewis has, and it lacks the same interesting habit of exploding. Mrs. Lewis lives out at Chestnut Hill, which, you must know, stands second only to my own beautiful Chester valley in being the prettiest suburb of Philadelphia. Mrs. Lewis's samovar does quite wonderful things. It stands in the drawing-room on a little table in front of the sofa. One afternoon, when Mrs. Lewis was making tea there, and, I suppose, had the spirit flame a bit too high, the samovar went off like a geyser, and sent a fountain of boiling tea up to the very ceiling. And there, in plain view, it left an unsightly spot. This was no slight disaster, for Mrs. Lewis's house is old, and the walls are done in a sort of kalsomining wash, that you cannot at all patch up in case of accident, but must decorate entirely afresh. Furthermore, Mrs. Lewis, as every one knows, has some beautiful pictures in her drawing-room, and it would have been a serious undertaking to dismantle the room and hand it over to the decorators. It was a question what to do. While the matter was still under discussion, Mrs. Lewis was again making tea, and in the same spot. But this time the samovar had only hot water in it; the tea had not yet been added. Again the flame was too high, I suppose, for again the samovar became a geyser. A column of boiling water rose hissing to the ceiling. Mrs. Lewis was beginning to think that her

quaint samovar was possessed of an evil spirit, and had better be retired from active service; but no such fate befell it, for when the ceiling dried the unsightly spot had entirely disappeared. A samovar that can spoil your ceiling for you, and then repair it, is not a thing to be put lightly on the shelf. I was not present when all this happened, but Mrs. Lewis is a very truthful woman, and she told me the story herself. It was one day when I was taking luncheon with her. There were four of us, — Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, my good friend Mrs. Thorne, and myself. Something else rather interesting happened that day. In the dining-room there is a splendid big Tintoretto, one of the very few that are owned in America, a Claude Lorraine landscape, and several other notable canvases that would now be hanging in the Louvre if French gold could buy them. Opposite to me and over the door leading into the pantry there was a landscape by Hunt, and of such splendid coloring that at once I thought of Titian. After luncheon, when we were making the round of the pictures, Mrs. Lewis asked if this one did not remind us of an old master, and begged us to tell her which one. Mrs. Thorne would hazard no guess, and mine seemed quite too wild to mention. But when Mrs. Lewis said that the picture always reminded her of Titian, I hastened to confess the same thought, and added, "I think I know the very picture you have in mind. It is the Earthly and the Heavenly Love, and hangs in the Villa Borghese at Rome. It is the wonderful sky that is the same in

both pictures." It happened that I was right, and Mrs. Lewis went on to tell us something of the history of the picture. When she first owned it, the horizon was crooked — there was a stretch of ocean in the picture — and on the cliff in the foreground a couple of little boys in decidedly store clothes were playing, of all games in the world, croquet. One day when Hunt was at the house, Mrs. Lewis asked him to straighten the horizon for her. He was so good-natured about it that she ventured to ask as an additional favor that the little boys and their store clothes and their mallets and balls and wickets might be sent where they belonged, and the onlooker be allowed to enjoy the wonderful sky in peace. It was done at once, and now the picture is wholly beautiful. They say there is a woman back of every good picture that ever was painted.

The United Kingdom rather like these anecdotes of mine about America. I try very hard to give them true pictures, but it is difficult to present anything like a unit impression. I never realized before what a composite thing America is. I have been myself in every state and territory save Florida and Alaska, and if I should tell all my adventures at once, it would be impossible for a European to believe that they had all happened under one flag. What is quite possible and commonplace in the South could never happen in Boston, and the doings at Cambridge, our modern Athens, God bless her! would be quite incredible in New Mexico. So I am always careful to tell

in just what part of America my adventures befell. But I might as well spare myself the trouble, as far as the United Kingdom are concerned, for their ignorance of American geography is so profound as to be delicious. They asked me the other day where New England was. Perhaps they took it for a suburb of Chicago. I am quite resolved at Christmas time to give them a wall map of the United States, if I don't yield to the temptation and give it sooner.

The ignorance of the United Kingdom about American literature is even more astonishing. They have never read Emerson, imagine it, our gentle Emerson, who is read on both sides of the Atlantic with such fervor. And they don't know what happened at Concord. The first time I went to Concord I was minded to go barefooted, it seemed to me such holy ground. And when I came home I had to tell everybody about my visit, even a small boy of my acquaintance, for I was so full of it. With the small boy, I began by asking if he knew what Concord was noted for. "Oh, yes," said he. "Tell me," I answered, wondering whether he would say Emerson or Hawthorne, Thoreau or the Alcotts. "For the Concord grape," said he triumphantly, and I suppose he wondered why I looked so crestfallen, and why Charlotte laughed so outrageously.

One would hardly think that Emerson had written in the same language. Even in the very heart of Germany, at Weimar, — a place, by the way, that strongly reminds me of Concord, such sweet reverence

have they for the brave spirits that have been, — the hard-working woman who kept our pension knew better about our literature than does the United Kingdom collectively. She had read Howells and Henry James and other American writers, but she quite won my heart by saying: "Of all the high spirits in our books, mein Herr, it is a countryman of yours that I love the best. His name was Emerson."

Equally surprising is the profound ignorance of the United Kingdom about the simplest facts of natural science. I wonder, sometimes, that they have lived so long to tell the tale. The other afternoon, for example, England told me, as a triumph of good management, that the preceding night she had shut the damper to the stove so as to throw all the *heat* into the room. This is the favorite French method of committing suicide. Only the fact that the rooms of the Château are so large, and the damper not at all a close fit, saved the imperialist cause a sturdy champion.

But in spite of their ignorance of Emerson, and their imperialism, there is an undoubted charm about these old gentlewomen, and an undeniable culture. And then it dawns upon me at times that their ignorance appears so profound, because it is an ignorance of the things that I happen to know. I discover every day what a vast number of things they know that I don't. They quite make me wish that I had read some of the books so laboriously written by my good friend, the history man. Partly because of the genu-

ine friendship that a longer acquaintance with the United Kingdom brings about, and partly for the sake of finding out how the very intelligent and positive daughter of an Indian colonel looks at life, I am getting into the habit of prolonging these tea drinkings until dusk on the afternoons that I have no music lesson. The Châtelaine herself sometimes joins us, and in the lengthening shadows we have talks that become to me increasingly interesting. The Châtelaine is much better informed about American affairs than are the United Kingdom, and this because she has so many American friends, and also because the people not occupied in conquering the rest of the world are more in touch with current movements. To a certain class of ideas, to me very leavening ideas, England and Ireland are absolutely inaccessible. They are as impenetrable to democracy as is my aristocratic old aunt Percyfield. The historic sense does not seem to have brought them any prophetic power. But does not my dear Matthew Arnold say that the English aristocracy is noted for its high spirit and its inaptitude for ideas? As I was saying, however, it is amazing how thoroughly you can disapprove of people's politics, and still have a friendly regard for the people themselves. It is the same way at home. I am myself very hot for free trade, but some of my best friends are misguided protectionists.

Sometimes Monsieur and Madame du Chêne join us of an afternoon, and then the talk is almost as lively as it is at Charlotte's Sunday evening salons. And I

have learned one very important thing from these talks. It is fear. It would be a poor lesson to learn of man or woman if it were personal fear. That is a lesson, please God, that I will never learn of any one. But I mean national fear. We do not in America enough appreciate our superb security. The sea is the best garden hedge a nation can have. To stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to have but one neighbor on the north and one on the south, both friendly and both weaker than ourselves, this alone is a tremendous boon. It will be a shame upon us if we do not outstrip all the nations in goodness and in prosperity, for we of all the nations do not know fear. The Briton owes much of his high spirit to the fact that the sea has been his frontier. He is invincible as long as he sticks to his island. As long as his colonies are self-governed, practically independent members of a great Anglo-Saxon confederation, he may repeat his pretty story about the sun's never setting on the lands of Great Britain, and no harm come of it. For my part, I am very glad that the sun does set once a day on America and rise again: it gives us a chance to rest and do a better day's work on the morrow. I shall send this toast to Charlotte for the family dinner at Uplands, on Thanksgiving: "May the stars and stripes be kissed each day by the setting as well as by the rising sun. May the greed of imperialism never take hold of the Great Republic." Frederic will read it in his fine barytone voice, and Charlotte will cry, "Hear! Hear!"

My brother of Great Britain, my noble Anglo-Saxon, lacks no bravery as long as he is himself. He becomes a coward only when he becomes a conqueror. It is his dependencies that make him shake in his boots. It is India and Africa that keep him awake of nights.

Here on the Continent there is universal fear. It was worth crossing the ocean to make the discovery. Without this key, an American cannot understand the triple and quadruple alliances, the jealously watched balance of power, the cowardly diplomacy, the paralysis of the Powers before the Sick Man of Europe, the constant war cloud in the East. It is like a nervous game of chess. One listens always for the cry of "check!" and dreads the final checkmate. Shall America join this family party of fear? I pray God not. The hope of the world is not here. It is in America, in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand, it is in any country where men are devoting themselves to self-conquest, to the perfecting of the daily life, and have thrown over once for all the dog-in-the-manger attitude towards events. There is but one cure for this malady of fear, this malady as characteristic of Europe as dyspepsia is of America. It is internationalism. It is democracy. We Americans come over to Europe very gayly of a summer. We flit about from place to place, much struck indeed with the superficial aspect of things, playing as ignorantly with political and social conditions as children with loaded firearms, and even wishing in our ignorance to import some of these outworn conditions into America.

It is a picturesque holiday for us. But it behooves us to take care. There are grave human issues at stake. It is not a time for sentimentality. Not even the bright little person on the throne of the Netherlands, or the beautiful woman at Rome, or the family group at Windsor, or the picturesque uniforms of the Hohenzollern, or the pathetic autocrat at St. Petersburg must blind us to the fact that these all belong to a past order of things, that dynastic aspiration is only another name for colossal, inhuman selfishness. It was this that turned the first Napoleon, the man who might have been the deliverer of Europe, into a monster so intolerable that he had to be quarantined at St. Helena.

Every American girl who catches at the trinket of a European title, every American gentleman who suffers the slightest breach in the sound ramparts of his own simple democracy, adds another link in the chain of fear, and is traitor to the country of Washington and Lincoln, Emerson and Whitman; worse still, they are traitors to humanity itself. And I blame the men far more than the girls. Even in this age of the new woman, the men still have the greater experience, and that ought to make them the stronger. To the girls, be it remembered, the temptation comes sugar-coated with the semblance of love. And then, as Charlotte says, we men of the Great Republic should make ourselves so attractive that our European rivals would have no chance whatever.

There is no internationalism possible between monarchies. If the lion and the lamb lie down together,

they must be concentric. Nor is there between imperialistic republics, nor with an army-ridden country like France, where *la gloire*, like the measles, may break out any fine day when the sun happens to shine upon a man on horseback. Internationalism is only possible between self-governed, self-respecting people, that is, between genuine democracies. And my daily prayer for America is that she may be such a democracy, and may escape the black plague of European fear. We have now such command of the forces of Nature, such power to make the earth fair, that it is fear only, and the selfishness born of fear, that ward off the millennium.

When I was a little boy, and heard the clergyman at old St. David's preach about the terrors of the day of judgment, and how it would come as a thief in the night, *when no man knoweth*, I used to keep the matter in mind as long as my boyish memory would hold out, for I had the droll conceit that the day of judgment could not fall as long as any one person — even a little boy in knickerbockers — was thinking about it. I have long since given up this grave fight, for I know now that the day of judgment comes any day and every day.

CHAPTER III

MOONLIGHT

I HAVE been working very hard to-day. The mood was on. I got out of bed much earlier than my wont. I wrote almost steadily until four o'clock, stopping only for my meals. England noticed my abstraction and asked kindly if I had had bad news from home. Then I remembered with a blush that I had not even read my letters, a most unusual proceeding for me, and one of the letters from Charlotte, too! England laughed when she saw my embarrassment. "Ah," she said, "you literary men are an absent-minded lot. You are as bad as lovers."

"And if, Madame," said I, "a man should be both?"

"You would be insupportable," she answered promptly, and with that I took myself off.

When four o'clock came, the fire had somewhat spent itself and I knew that I ought to be getting the fresh air. I was so full of my work, however, that I wanted no company, not that of Coco, nor even of my wheel. I went off on foot, choosing a favorite route of mine through the little village of La Capite, and on past the Tower of the Egyptian to those quiet lanes on the south slope where one has such splendid views

of the Alps. I got there a trifle after sunset and what I saw quite drove my work out of my head, and brought me back at last to the present moment.

There are other spots in Switzerland where one has grander and more extensive views, but none, I think, more beautiful than this. Far below me, there was a broad, flat valley, unrolled apparently for no other reason than for my particular delight. The gloaming already covered it, as with a filmy gauze. The colors were all low-pitched but not yet extinguished. Here and there a green field made a subdued high light and gave the sombre plain an air of irrepressible vitality. Opposite, on the other side of the valley, were two tiers of gray-black hills, flat walls of shade, with outlines as distinct and jagged as if they had been cut out of giant pasteboard, the setting of some more than Wagnerian opera. Beyond the hills there lay a purple cloud that mimicked the empty space that stretches along and beyond the horizon. But above the cloud, unreal in its isolation and its transcendent beauty, rose the solemn, snowy stillness of Mont Blanc. It was in the sunlight, in the light that for the rest of the world had already faded, and stood there palpitating rose and gold. The effect was tremendous. It was like a vision of the New Jerusalem, like the dazzle of walls of jasper, like a glimpse of another world, radiant, perfect, eternal. It laid such hold upon my spirit that I stood there, rooted to the spot, drinking in the almost supernatural beauty as a thirsty man takes water. I waited until the last touch of rosy

light had faded from the mountain, and the highest summit in Europe had passed with me into the night. Then I walked home slowly, as a man does who has seen a vision.

When I reached the Château, the moon was shining brightly, and here in my great bare chamber was making broad patches of light upon the floor. It was a dream world of half lights and shadows, much too alluring to be disturbed. I could not light my lamp. I drew my armchair up to the great south window, threw myself into the chair, and let the moonbeams carry me where they would. They seemed disposed to be very active. It is a solemn thing to sit in the moonlight quite alone; more solemn in a great bare room like this than in the open, for the shadows are deeper, and space itself more unreal.

Then Margaret came and sat in the chair opposite to me.

Margaret is a woman now, in the very bloom of womanhood, but the moonlight is a tricksy thing, and in its own effortless way changed her back into a little girl of a dozen years. She looked as she did the first day ever I saw her. My grandfather Percyfield had occasion to spend a winter in New Orleans. He was, I think, interested in some cotton plantations. My mother and Charlotte and I went with him. We were little accustomed to hotels and boarding houses, having always lived in our own home, either at Uplands, or for a few months in cold weather at the house in town, and so it seemed wise and natural to hire a furnished

house, and set up our own establishment, even though it be for only a winter. The house my grandfather Percyfield selected was a large, old-fashioned mansion at the country end of St. Charles Street. My grandfather Percyfield was a very dignified man, a gentleman of the old school, and would have looked strangely out of place in a new house with any show of pretension. But in those days, such would have been difficult to find in New Orleans, for the city was still suffering from the war and was in a sad state of poverty. Our house was square and low, with a gallery running around three sides of it, and detached buildings in the rear for the kitchen and servants' quarters. The house was built on an artificial terrace, and from the front gallery we could see the great chocolate-colored river flowing on to the Gulf and could catch a glimpse of the low, swampy shore opposite. The lawn surrounding the house was firm and well kept, and the orange and magnolia trees were irreproachable in their glossy orderliness. The house itself was much in need of paint, and there were unmistakable signs of shabbiness indoors, telling very plainly that for some years past there had been little spare money for replenishings. The former occupants had manifestly been gentlefolk, and had left that impress upon every room in the house. My grandfather Percyfield had hired the estate of an agent in the city, and we knew nothing of the owners, not even their names, for the agent, to my grandfather Percyfield's surprise, inserted his own name in the lease, and intimated not dis-

courteously that it would be acceptable if no questions were asked. To my boyish mind this little mystery added immensely to the charm of the old house, and from the first, I came to be very fond of it. It had no name that we knew of, and so my mother laughingly christened it Hereford Hall, after the old English place that her stanch Puritan forebears came from. It was probably as unlike the original Hereford Hall as two houses could well be, but we all fell into the way of using the name, and it served very well to distinguish this temporary home from my grandfather Percyfield's place in Pennsylvania, which has been known as Uplands ever since the time of William Penn. My grandfather Marston's home was in Massachusetts. This gained me the nickname of Yankee among the more hot-headed little rebels of my playfellows, and got me into some trouble that winter. The little people had never surrendered, and though I was a peaceable enough lad myself, I was as keen an Abolitionist as my grandfather Marston, and having always been accustomed to speaking my mind very freely, I had plenty of quarrels on my hands during my first two or three weeks at New Orleans. Afterwards when we got to know one another, this was all forgotten, and I never had warmer friends than among those same little rebels.

There was a small cottage next to Hereford Hall, on the country side, a very small place indeed, but withal very pretty, for it was half buried in creeping vines and greenery of one sort and another. It was

very neatly kept, too, in decided contrast to some of the larger and less tidy places on the opposite side of St. Charles Street. A few mornings after our establishment at the Hall, I was walking up and down the gallery directly after breakfast. Charlotte was with me. We both had a child's delight in the great river. It took us some days to get over our disappointment that it was so muddy, but when my grandfather Percyfield explained to us that had there been no sediment in the great river, there had been no New Orleans, or even Louisiana, that in bygone ages the river had emptied into the Gulf away up in Illinois, we were entirely comforted and came to look upon the chocolate-colored flood as a giant builder sending out long arms into the Gulf and adding sugar and cotton plantations by the hundred acres. I have noticed that when one knows the world chiefly as the content of a geography book, it gives one a thrill to find out that it is real. My earliest remembrance of New Orleans is the tremendous impression it made upon Charlotte and me to find the Mississippi a reality. This child-like wonder has never left me, though I have since wandered over full half the globe. I remember saying to Charlotte the first time we were in Dresden, "And *this* is Dresden!" and the way she put her arm through mine, and snuggled up to me, told me that she felt the same delighted wonder.

After we had taken a number of turns on the gallery, Charlotte went into the house, and I trotted up and down alone. It was my fourteenth birthday, I re-

member, and I felt very mannish indeed. I was still in knickerbockers, but I had on a real piccadilly collar, and was proud accordingly. I happened to glance over at the little cottage, and I saw something there that made me quite forget the great river, my birthday, the erect collar, and in fact everything else that had once made up my small world. The prettiest little girl that I had ever seen was looking through a gap in the hedge that separated the cottage grounds from ours. She was looking at the Hall, a little wistfully I thought, and did not catch sight of me for several moments. When she did see me, she disappeared in a flash. But the mischief was already done. It was a case of love at first sight. I can see my little lady as plainly to-night as if she were sitting in the chair opposite to me in very truth instead of being there only in my fancy. The prettiness of her face did not prevent its being strong She had rather prominent cheek bones, and a pair of dark brown eyes that I found afterwards could flash fire as well as look wistful. Her hair was abundant and curly, and of a very light chestnut color. In the sun it looked almost yellow. This combination of dark eyes and light hair constituted her great beauty. She was neither blond nor brunette, but appeared sometimes one and sometimes the other. She was dressed in a plain blue frock made in the sailor fashion. I would have given all my birthday presents to have her remain at the gap in the hedge for even two minutes longer.

You must not think that I was a sentimental boy. I was imaginative and high-strung and all that, but not in the least bit sentimental. I had always had Charlotte and her little friends for playfellows, and was quite too accustomed to having girls around to think about them one way or the other. I rather preferred games and occasions where there were both boys and girls, but that was simply because it was more picturesque. I had even then a very keen sense of color. I liked the girls' bright frocks and the varied lights that one sees in children's long hair. But a small boy in kilts with a very bright tie, or long curly hair, or flaxen locks cut in the Dutch fashion, or particularly red cheeks, or a broad sailor collar over a baby blue jacket, served the purpose equally well. And I never cared to have girls on my walking trips. In the first place they could not go so far or so fast, and more important still they interfered with the swimming. I had a passion for the water, and a fashion of slipping out of my clothes and into the nearest pool or stream, that makes me think I must in some previous incarnation have been a primitive person living much in the open air, — I hope it was in Greece in the time of Pericles. Bayard Taylor used to say that he himself had once been a pine-tree, so fond was he of the pines. His place at Cedarcroft was within driving distance of Uplands, and my grandfather Percyfield used often to take Charlotte and me over there to see him. I don't know that I was ever a tree, but if so it must have been one with very long

limbs, perhaps a Lombardy poplar, tall and straight and slender.

My grandfather Percyfield used to encourage this open air bathing, and often went out of his way to give me an extra chance, for he thought it made me sturdy; he would rather have had me die than turn out a weakling. But he used to laugh and tell me that if ever I got to be a painter it would certainly be in aquarelle. This was the nearest approach to a pun that I ever knew him to get, except on one memorable occasion when it was by accident.

From all this you can see that I was just a healthy, well-bred boy, and not at all given to the sentimental. And yet this love affair of mine, the first and only one that I have ever had, was the most real thing that ever came into my life. It did not progress very rapidly, and was anything but smooth. I was rather a good-looking boy, though I have since grown to be a homely man. But I was counted a Yankee, and Margaret was a hot little rebel. She had another cause for disliking all of us, but that I did not discover until afterwards. I was not a secretive lad, and having fallen suddenly in love, I announced it with as much frankness as I should have done any other personal discovery. My mother and Charlotte and my grandfather Percyfield showed the utmost good feeling about it, and even took the matter seriously, which, considering that I was just fourteen, was an unusual kindness.

I have had many things to be thankful for in my

life, but above everything else that my people were well bred.

I had plenty of time that winter for my love affair, for I did not go to school, but I rather suspect that in either case the result would have been the same. My grandfather Percyfield was a very original man, and seldom allowed me to go to school. He held that association with my mother and himself, and with the persons who had the entrée of our house, would do more to educate me than the daily contact with persons of less quality. He was himself a born knight, and I never marveled that my grandmother should have fallen in love with him. With his ideas of courtesy, the rising generation seemed to him unmannerly and bourgeois. It was his firm conviction that herding boys together in school made them dull and commonplace, and what was even worse, less reverent and knightly. So he preferred my swimming and my horseback riding and my desultory reading, even my love-making, to anything the schoolmasters could have given me. So little formal was my education that I fancied myself growing up in great ignorance, and sometimes even envied what I took to be the larger knowledge of other boys. But I see now that my grandfather Percyfield was in reality a very subtle teacher, and that my education covered the whole twenty-four hours in place of the customary school session. My mother taught me French, and gave me her own love of poetry and color. My grandfather Percyfield had a great appreciation of French, though

he could not speak a word of it himself, but he had keen literary instincts, and he was greatly impressed with the splendid directness of those books he had read which were translated from the French. He really directed my reading, though he did it so skillfully that at the time I never knew it. But the very heart of his creed was that at all hazards a man should be genuine. He tried to form my taste in literary matters, but he always allowed me to read what I wanted. I only remember one book that he forbade my reading, and that was "The Children of the Abbey." I have often wondered why he objected to it, but though I have run across the book several times in different parts of the world, I have never opened it. The old prohibition seems as much in force now as when I was a boy.

My grandfather Percyfield encouraged me to cultivate a great many interests, and went to any amount of expense and trouble in furthering them. I was very fond of him, and, at the time, I thought he did all this solely for my pleasure. And, indeed, this was so, but it was for a deeper pleasure than I recognized. It was his way of educating me. He denied me but one thing, and that was music. He took me when I was a very small boy to hear Ole Bull play the violin, and occasionally we went to symphony concerts, and to the opera, but he would not allow me to be taught either the violin or the piano. My mother played the piano beautifully, and I think that my grandfather Percyfield knew that, with my dreamy temperament,

I should grow to be passionately fond of music, and he feared that excessive practicing might injure my health. The sketching took me out of doors, so he encouraged that, and three times a week I went to a shabby little studio on Canal Street, and had lessons in drawing from an old French artist.

In looking back upon the educational methods of my grandfather Percyfield, I feel that I am not enough of a pedagogue to pass judgment on them. They might not work in other families where there was not the same beautiful, cultivated mother, the same knightly grandfather, and the same charming little sister. But this I know, that I never think of my grandfather Percyfield without a great rush of affection and gratitude. He put me in touch with life at first hand. He taught me reverence and manly courtesy. He filled my days with wholesome interests, and with tastes that have flourished with the years, and have made of life a constantly renewed delight. Now that I am a man, and getting on towards thirty, I see that no school or master, whatever else they might have taught me, could have done so much as this. I can look forward to old age without dread, and can anticipate immortality with joy, for it will take eternity to do all the beautiful things that I have in mind to do.

In all of his plans, my grandfather Percyfield was more than seconded by my mother, and owed much of his success in carrying them out to her goodness and ability. But I cannot yet bring myself to speak of

my mother, for her loss has been the one tragedy in an otherwise sunny life.

Margaret was only twelve that winter, but she already went to school. Her grandfather and her uncle had both been killed in battle, fighting for the Confederacy, and her own father, though he survived the war by several years, died eventually from the effects of its exposures and hardships. He had been a mere boy when he enlisted, and was still a young man when he died. Margaret had never seen her father, and worshiped his memory as small Catholics worship the saints. Only she and her mother were left, and Aunt Viney, a colored woman, who had been Mrs. Ravenel's slave, and who refused to leave her when the family fortunes fell low. Aunt Viney always called Mrs. Ravenel "Mis' Lucy," and never addressed my little lady other than as "Miss Marg'ret." Aunt Viney was my friend from the very first. She had my grandfather Percyfield's ideas of quality, and liked what she was pleased to call my pretty manners. How she ever stomached my being a Yankee I never knew. She probably put it down as a disease which I might in time outgrow.

It was a trial to have Margaret trot off to school five days in the week, but with all their other troubles I suppose it was too much to expect Mrs. Ravenel to teach her at home. Besides their graver human losses, the war had involved nearly all of their fortune, and at that time they were very poor. It is no wonder that Margaret was a rebel. The blue sailor frock did

service all winter, and, in my fancy, it is the one she always wears. I had innocently supposed that she wore it so much because she looked so beautiful in it, but Charlotte told me one day, with a look of real surprise and distress in her own blue eyes, that it was because Margaret had no other. We could not at all understand how this came to be, for at that time we knew as little about social economy as Marie Antoinette herself. My grandfather Percyfield supplied all our own wants most liberally, but he never allowed us to have any money, for he held that children grow up with a far more generous spirit if they give and receive without any thought of exchange. Had I ever offered to render him any little service for pay, he would have scorned me as a miserable little trader, even were the coin a box of sugar-plums. Fortunately I never did, for he had trained me too well for that. In my boyish way, I was as punctilious as he.

The Ravenels were as gently bred as the Percyfields, and, under pressure of their poverty, held their heads even a little bit higher. This made them very hard to get acquainted with, and, for a time, not even the combined sagacity of Hereford Hall succeeded in breaking the ice. I might prance up and down the gallery as much as I pleased, no face appeared at the gap in the hedge. It was, of course, impossible for a well-bred boy deliberately to watch the cottage, but when, in the course of my gallery promenades, I had to face it, it was at least permissible not to turn my head away. In this manner, I got frequent glimpses

of Margaret, but the hedge was so high that it was seldom of her face. At home she never wore a hat, and it was usually the glint of her hair, as she flashed in and out of the sunshine, that caught my eye. I was in hopes that Mrs. Ravenel would call on my mother, but that did not happen, at least not until several weeks afterwards. It was to an accident that I finally owed an acquaintance with my lady. I had been out on one of my long walks, and on the way home had fallen in with two little boys, who turned out to be very hot-blooded little Southerners. Everything went very well, however, until we got almost to the Hall. It was my own fault, I am sure, for I made some foolish and unnecessary remark about slavery, and then, quite before we knew exactly what had happened, my two little hot-bloods and I were in the midst of an energetic fight. No great mischief was done, however, for it was called off almost immediately by a child's imperious voice.

"Randolph! Peyton! Shame on you! Since when has it been the custom for Southern *gentlemen* to fight two to one?"

The voice was absolutely withering in its scorn, and made us all drop our hands instantly. It was Margaret. She happened to be on her way from school. I did not even know her name, but I had my wits about me and was quite resolved to make the most of my opportunity. I bowed in a manner that was a very good imitation, I think, of the way the heroes in the Waverley novels bowed, and said, with the air of

the grand but contrite gentleman, "I am very sorry. It was all my fault. Please don't blame your friends."

The boys were pleased to consider this very handsome behavior, though indeed it was but the truth, and were profuse in their denials and apologies. I was afraid that in this general flood of amiability Margaret might escape, so I turned to her and said, —

"It seems that we were all to blame, and that you have been the good angel to the three of us."

I thought this a very pretty speech and I could see that it made some impression. Margaret nodded her head in a comical little way that was intended to be gracious, and again I was afraid to lose her, so I hurried on, —

"I should like to know such generous enemies. I am Master John Percyfield, of Hereford Hall."

Margaret stepped forward with the air of a lady quite in society, and named the boys in her clear, imperious voice, "This is Master Randolph Beauregard, of Bellevue Plantation, and this is his brother, Master Peyton Beauregard."

The boys shook hands with me very heartily, for they were as gentlemanly little fellows as I have ever seen. But again Margaret was escaping, and I had to be very quick in asking to be presented to her. Peyton happened to be in the better position, and said courteously, "Miss Margaret Ravenel."

After that we all came down from our stilted language, and were four friendly children together. And indeed it was well, for my rhetorical high-horse would

soon have thrown me, and the Beauregard boys, though they went to school, could not, I think, have outridden me. I invited the three children to come to the Hall and play with Charlotte and me. Margaret had first to ask her mother's permission, and I, as self-appointed knight, must needs carry the satchel of schoolbooks and await the answer. Mrs. Ravenel was not at home, but Aunt Viney bade Margaret go. This in itself was a bit of good fortune, for I rather fancy that Mrs. Ravenel would have found some excuse for withholding her permission.

It was in those prehistoric days, you must remember, before lawn tennis came into vogue at New Orleans, when the children still played croquet. Peyton obligingly said that he would watch the game, so that Charlotte and Randolph might play against Margaret and me. I had considerable skill in putting the balls where I wanted them to go, and naturally I played my very prettiest. Charlotte had kindly arranged the matter of partners, but she did not by any means give us the game. She was a bit of a coquette, and had no willingness to appear less than her best in the eyes of either Randolph or Peyton. Then my mother came out on the lawn, and had Susan fetch us lemonade and cakes. I was in the seventh heaven, for there is nothing like a hotly contested game to make people feel very chummy, and Margaret and I having been both partners and victors, were by that time fast friends.

Our little party was presently interrupted by a

prolonged musical whistle, which meant, "Margaret, come home." Margaret answered in a higher key, with a pretty little aria, which meant, "Yes, mother; I am coming." Mrs. Ravenel was the first person that I ever met who could really whistle beautifully. She used often to accompany herself on the piano in this way, to the great delight of Charlotte and myself. Margaret had the same trick, but she was very apt to get an octave higher.

After that first afternoon, Charlotte and I were in clover. With the exception of the one deep sorrow, we have both had very sunny lives, and have been more than ordinarily happy, but that winter at New Orleans stands out, I think, for both of us as the very brightest time of all. We had both my mother and my grandfather Percyfield, and then Margaret and Randolph and Peyton almost lived at the Hall. Randolph constituted himself the special knight of Charlotte, and I had Margaret. Peyton was one of those dreamy boys who seemed to need no special comradeship. He loved us all with the impulsive ardor of a child. In some of his ways he was almost girlish. He would come up and put his arms around me, just as my mother might have done, and kiss me two or three times at once. I should have resented this in Randolph, but with Peyton I could never be anything but pleased. He had sudden gusts of passion, but they were like April showers, and soon over. I never knew a child who was so completely idolized by other children as Peyton was. He was a strange little

being, who seemed to us all as something rather finer than we could ever hope to be.

As spring came on, we used often to go out to the plantation of the Beauregard family at Bellevue. We had rare sport racing over the fields, and playing in the half deserted slave quarters, or in the great sugar houses. But during the winter, if one may use so severe a term for anything so mild, Hereford Hall was the acknowledged headquarters. Charlotte and I, not being at school, had more time to arrange our innocent little fêtes, and Charlotte is a born hostess. Then we had both my mother and my grandfather Percyfield to help us in all our plans, and this they did without reservation, for they enjoyed seeing us happy, and they took themselves a personal pleasure in genuine gayety. Night after night my mother would play for us on the old square piano that formed a part of the furniture of our half shabby drawing-room, and the Lee children, and the younger Beaumonts, and the Masons, and the Tilghman girls, and the Magruders would come in, and with our pentagon, as Randolph called our smaller and more intimate circle, we had enough for two sets for the lancers or a cotillion. When there were not enough for this, we made one set with double sides, and my mother, who was a skillful musician, always made the music hold out until we had finished the grand chain, or accomplished the requisite amount of visiting to neighboring couples.

My grandfather Percyfield was always present. He invariably dressed for dinner, being in all these little

matters more particular, I am afraid, than his grandson. He made a dignified figure with his old-fashioned stock and quaint dinner coat. Occasionally Mrs. Ravenel came in, and sometimes Mr. and Mrs. Mason, or the parents of some of the other children. We kept open house that winter, as we always did at Uplands. My grandfather Percyfield welcomed everybody with sincere and old-time hospitality when they had once passed his careful initial scrutiny. We, on our part, were soon received in all the best houses, a result which I see now, in looking back upon it, was due entirely to the gentle courtesy and tact of my beautiful mother and my wise old grandfather, and not at all to our money. Indeed, the money would have been a serious obstacle had it been less delicately administered, for I have never found, even in Europe, a pride equal to that of these reduced first families of New Orleans. I am glad to think that they have since met with better fortune.

At these delightful little parties, Margaret was always my chosen partner. In fact, we got into the habit, all of us, of dancing with the same girl or boy, a custom which added to our pleasure, if not to our skill in dancing.

Susan and the other colored people stationed themselves in the hall, and watched the dancing with the greatest delight. Aunt Viney often joined them, but never stopped long unless "Mis' Lucy" were in the drawing-room. Her devotion to Mrs. Ravenel and Margaret was one of the most beautiful things I saw

in New Orleans, and when I came to be included in the affection of this rare old colored woman, I felt as honored as if an empress had taken notice of me.

The refreshments were always very light, usually lemonade and the simplest sort of cake; or, on special occasions, ice-cream with some home-made sponge-cake. Susan only brought the goodies to the table in the hall. Young as we were, my grandfather Percyfield always had us boys do the serving, for he held that this, too, was an accomplishment. He was himself very dexterous with his hands, and took no little pride in his salad dressings and simple feats of cookery. At Uplands we always had scallops for our Sunday morning breakfast during the season, and my grandfather Percyfield always cooked them himself, using an old silver chafing-dish that Pompey deposited with much ceremony on a small table at the left of my grandfather Percyfield's armchair. I think that this was the one thing that Pompey did not approve of in my grandfather Percyfield. Otherwise he quite idolized him, but this skill in cookery he regarded as a weakness in the quality, and took no pains to conceal his disapproval. Pompey had much the same feeling about us boys when we handed around the refreshments. When his resentment got too much for him he would suddenly disappear from the hall, and, retiring to the servants' quarters, would pick the banjo most viciously. Aunt Viney took a different view of the case. She was quite as aristocratic in her views of life as ever Pompey was, but she had a sharp eye,

this old woman had, and she preferred the little bow that Peyton or I made, when we presented a glass of lemonade or a plate of ice-cream to her "Mis' Lucy," to the most skillful genuflexions of which Pompey was capable. She often rewarded me with open commendation when I came back for a plate of cake, "Yo' done thet beautiful, honey, fo' shuh."

At nine o'clock our little parties broke up. My grandfather Percyfield was inexorable on this point, and when we coaxed him for just one more reel or cotillion, he always told us that we had to get all of our beauty sleep before twelve o'clock. I think he was sincere in his regard for our good looks. It was a part of his creed that men should be strong and women should be beautiful. I have often thought how splendidly he and my mother illustrated this creed, for they compared well with the best that New Orleans had to offer.

These little dances came once a week, and usually of a Friday night, so as not to interfere with the other children's school-going and lessons. Randolph and Peyton always stopped at the Hall overnight. As we liked to sleep in the same room, my mother gave me the large front chamber that had evidently been meant for guests, and added an extra little bed so that it would accommodate the three of us. Randolph slept in the single bed, and Peyton and I shared the old-fashioned four-poster. We named the four posts after the four evangelists, getting the idea, I suppose, from the child's verse, —

"Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless this bed that I lie on."

Being born aristocrats, both of us, we made Matthew and Mark take the two posts at the foot of the bed, and gave Luke and John the better places at the head. As we went around in order, my part of the bed was between John and Matthew, and Peyton's lay between Luke and Mark. Usually, however, we did not observe any boundaries, but slept with our arms around each other.

I had had a little brother once, younger than myself, but he had died. It seemed to me that Peyton came to take his place. Peyton was a little younger than I, and, as I have said, a singularly lovable child. As we were both of us as imaginative small boys as you could well find, we acted out the rôle so thoroughly that we almost came to believe that we *were* brothers. But this introduced a difficulty that at first seemed almost insurmountable. I always thought of Morris as a little boy angel, and to me he had a very real existence. I prayed for him every night, just as I did for the other members of my family. I was bothered to see how Morris could be in heaven, and at the same time in my own four-posted bed.

It was Peyton who saw the way out. He suggested that as he slept with me, as a rule, only once a week, he was my angel-brother on a visit. Nothing could have suited my lively imagination better. As soon as we got into bed, he was Peyton no longer, but Morris. The fiction of the four evangelists helped out the illusion.

But after that, I made Peyton sleep without any nightgown, for in all the pictures of boy angels I had seen, they never wore any clothing. As we had plenty of good warm coverings, I think that Peyton caught no colds as the result of my realism. He was, indeed, the picture of an angel. He was a very fair child, and he had the most beautiful little body that I have ever seen. When I put my arms around him, I think that even a less vivid fancy than mine could have mistaken him for a being from beyond the gates of jasper.

Nor did the more difficult part of our drama appall us — I mean the text. Being an angel, Peyton had to talk like one. He had to tell me all about the New Jerusalem, and whether there was any swimming there, and what he and the other boy angels did to amuse themselves. While I, being still on earth, had to tell Peyton all the good things I could think of, that I knew the angels would be glad to hear about; and also all the dreadful things that I had ever seen or read about, so that the angels could come down and put an end to them. This curious fiction was kept up all winter without the slightest loss of interest on the part of either earth or heaven, and as it was renewed every week, it grew to be a continued story of astonishing length and detail.

Randolph was much less imaginative than we, and if we talked too loud, he would call out in a sleepy way, "Oh, keep still over there, can't you." Then Peyton and I would snuggle down very quietly until we heard

Randolph's regular breathing and knew that he was asleep. Once Peyton fell asleep while we were waiting, and I think he must have been an angel, for I remember that he was not at all vexed when I woke him up and asked him to tell me what happened next.

On these nights we completely lost our beauty sleep, — perhaps that is the reason I grew up to be homely, — and occasionally, when there was something particular going on in the New Jerusalem, we did not get to sleep until one. But it made less difference than it might have done, for on Saturday morning we were never called, but were allowed to have our sleep quite out. Indeed, my grandfather Percyfield would never allow either Charlotte or me to be wakened in the morning unless we were going on a journey, and it was absolutely necessary. He had an almost religious respect for sleep, as he had for all Nature's processes, and never willingly interrupted it. Often Peyton and I woke up to find the bright sun shining in through the cracks in the Venetian blinds, and Randolph gone for two or three hours. Morris never outlived the night. In the morning, it was always Peyton that I had my arms around. Then we got up and had our bath together right merrily, and as soon as we could dress, Susan got us our breakfast.

Sometimes now, when my friends take me upstairs and show me their model nurseries, with the little brass bedsteads ranged along the wall in hygienic isolation, I feel a vague sort of pity for their lonely little

occupants. A picture comes up before me of a great four-posted bed, with two little boys in the centre of it. One has on a long, white nightgown, and represents life. The other little fellow, without any clothes, is very beautiful and represents the other life. And I wonder whether the warm human brotherhood, and the fancy flights heavenward, were not more than compensation for the fact that a trifle less oxygen per minute passed into each little pair of lungs. I remember that my grandfather Percyfield counted it a part of our education, and after assuring himself that we had plenty of coverings and were not wakened in the morning, made no objection to this childish attempt to act out the poetry of life. He was even satisfied to lose the beauty sleep one night out of the seven, thinking that we were getting the greater beauty of spirit.

More severe people said that my grandfather Percyfield spoiled Charlotte and me by allowing us to live such a joyous, natural life, and by doing so much for our comfort and pleasure. I am afraid that my grandfather Marston would have said so, and my aunt Percyfield made no secret of her opinion. But I think they were mistaken. Along with the pleasure, he gave us the desire to use it at its highest, and through our great love and admiration for him, he implanted in us a sense of *noblesse oblige* that would, I verily believe, have taken us through fire and water, had there been any occasion for it. I may not speak so freely of myself, for it would be unbecoming, but I

have seen Charlotte do things that would have been worthy of a Roman matron of the most heroic period. It is not hardships that make men brave and women heroic. It is the ideas which they mix with their daily bread and butter.

My grandfather Percyfield once gave me a little book, — it was Max Müller's Memories, — and on the fly-leaf he wrote, "Strength and gentleness. Men have cultivated the one and women the other. Do thou cultivate both." I remember that I liked the sound of the words. There was something pleasant to my ears in the old-fashioned, mandatory English. But I did not half comprehend their meaning. I am coming now to see what he meant, and with all the force that is in me, I am trying to follow his injunction.

Margaret enjoyed these little dances, as she did all forms of activity, but better still she liked our charades and private theatricals. It was her pet ambition to be an actress, and had Mrs. Ravenel been foolish enough to consent, I think that Margaret would have made a star. She had the physical qualities, the beauty, the voice, the carriage, but above all she had the spiritual equipment. There was a fire about her that shone out in her eyes and expressed itself in all her movements. It would have thrilled an audience. But as Mrs. Ravenel would not hear of such a thing, we had to get as much acting as we could in a private way. I helped with a good will, for I always wanted to please Margaret, but I looked upon the stage all

the same as a very dangerous rival. Margaret was so imperious that I half expected Mrs. Ravenel sometime to give in. One day I told Margaret very positively that I meant to marry her just as soon as I was grown up. Boys do not realize that growing up is rather a gradual process. But Margaret tossed her head and said that she would not marry the king of England, for she was going on the stage.

My first experience of Margaret's acting came near to being disastrous. My mother and Charlotte had gone into the more built-up part of the city, where the shops were, to do some errands. Randolph and Peyton were off on some excursion with their father. It was Saturday afternoon and Margaret and I were left to our own devices. She proposed that we should act. She was to be pursued by brigands, — we had recently seen the Seven Wonderful Escapes of the Lady of Lyons, — and just at the critical moment was to faint, when I, as the hero of the play, was to rush in and carry her off, quite unhurt in spite of the pistol shots that resounded on all sides. I had never seen Margaret act and did not know how well she could do it. It was agreed that she should run around the drawing-room table three times, and then faint. I was to rush in from the hall, and carry her off to the dining-room, which served as the castle of Monaco, and was supposed to be my own family seat. Margaret's fright was superb. Her eyes flashed. Her breath came in audible gasps. She darted hither and thither like one truly pursued. I could fairly see the brigands, and

in my excitement could scarcely wait for the time of rescue to come. When Margaret had gone around the table twice she threw up her hands above her head, and went down on the floor with a crash, as nearly lifeless a mass as I had ever seen. Thoroughly frightened, I rushed over to her, and raised her face in my hands and covered it with passionate kisses, begging her piteously to come back to life. Margaret darted to her feet like a little fury, vowing that I was the greatest stupid in the world, and half suspecting that I, too, was acting. I was greatly taken aback, but when I explained to her that she had forgotten to run around the table the third time and that I had been truly half scared to death, she saw the reasonableness of it and forgave me. I fancy, too, that the triumph for her acting more than balanced her very real anger at the kisses.

Then we did the scene over again, more to her satisfaction, if not to mine.

After that we often had fainting scenes, for it was one of Margaret's specialties. In truth, I have never seen any one do it better, even on the real stage. It inspired Charlotte and me with a wild desire to do the same thing, and finally we got to do it almost as well as Margaret, though I confess that we covered ourselves with bruises long before we did with glory. In reality it is very simple. You merely relax every muscle and let yourself go as completely as if you were falling on a feather bed. Two or three years ago, after Charlotte and I had seen a famous actress in a

famous fainting scene, Charlotte recalled our own early efforts in that line. We were sitting in the drawing-room at Uplands, and Charlotte wondered if I could still do it, now that I was six feet. I offered to try, and found to my surprise that though at least eleven years had passed since our winter at New Orleans, I could still faint to perfection. Poor Charlotte was almost as much frightened as I was when Margaret fainted that first time, and to pay me for her fright made some cutting and highly moral remarks about how desirable it would be if one could remember useful accomplishments as easily as silly pranks. But I agreed with her so humbly that it ended by her laughing and trying it herself. However, she has a much shorter distance to fall than I have.

I got one comfort out of the castle of Monaco scene, even in its corrected form, and this was that having run off with the lady and brought her to my castle, the only logical thing to do was to marry her. Even Margaret admitted that.

We did a great deal in the way of theatricals that winter. All the pentagon came to share Margaret's enthusiasm. We worked in some of the Lee children and the younger Beaumonts for the minor parts. We had sleep-walking scenes, and suicides, and duels, and hairbreadth escapes, the more thrilling the better. I am afraid, indeed, that our taste ran decidedly to melodrama. Usually the plot thickened and developed as we entered into the spirit of the play, but sometimes Peyton and I put our heads together and got up

a more premeditated text. I had always to be careful, however, and not overact my part. Margaret was a very exacting stage manager, but she was very just in distributing the parts. Whenever I could, I contrived to take the part of the lover, if Margaret were the heroine, and in the more impassioned scenes I found it necessary to do at least some kissing. I could never get Margaret to like this part of my acting, but she sometimes submitted for artistic reasons. She was not a young lady, however, to permit any liberties, and I liked her the better for it. Peyton told me that once Fletcher Mason had taken Margaret out in a boat and when they got some distance from shore, he said, "Now, Margaret, I 'm going to kiss you." "No, you 're not, Fletcher Mason," cried Margaret. "Yes, I am," said he, making a move as if he were really going to do it. With that, Margaret sprang out of the boat into the water and tried to make her way to the shore. Fletcher was frightened almost to death, for the water was deep, and he had much ado to save Margaret from drowning.

Mrs. Lee was so impressed with one of our impromptu scenes, that she was for having us get up a regular play and invite our friends to see us act it. But my grandfather Percyfield put her off. He much preferred that we should make up our own plays and have only casual and informal audiences. I see now why he did. How shrewd he was, my dignified, affable old grandfather Percyfield, and what a subtle educator. At Christmas, however, he did give Mar-

garet a very pretty toy theatre, with scenes and figures for giving Hamlet, and he got us a number of paper copies of the play. This was not so much fun as acting ourselves, but it was a change, and it did what my grandfather Percyfield evidently meant that it should do, — it made us intimately acquainted with a great play. Ophelia was usually taken by Margaret and I commonly managed Hamlet. Margaret coached me on the soliloquy, however, for she thought I did not put enough tragedy into it. It was not convenient for more than about five to play with the theatre, and so each of us assumed one major and several minor parts. I am sure that Margaret knew the whole play by heart, and the rest knew it pretty nearly.

Later, my grandfather Percyfield got us five copies of A Midsummer-Night's Dream, and encouraged us to make the scenery and figures ourselves. I remember that Peyton managed the whole thing, for it was a play well suited to his imaginative nature.

It was my grandfather Percyfield also who suggested that we might make plays out of the Waverley novels. I had already read the greater part of them, but I was very glad to reread them under this fresh incentive and in the good company of the pentagon. My grandfather Percyfield often joined us, as did my mother, and they took their turn in the reading, or helped us with any long words. I remember, however, that they never told us the meaning of any unusual word unless we asked for it, and seldom added any information outside of the story unless there was the most

natural occasion for it. I think that on the whole, Ivanhoe was our favorite, though Charlotte rather inclined to The Talisman. We acted parts of Ivanhoe with great spirit. It happened to be my first choice of characters, and of course I took the title rôle, dressing myself in one of Charlotte's old plaid dresses, and baring my legs and knees in genuine Scotch fashion. When Margaret announced that she would be Rowena, my happiness was complete. She wore a white petticoat of her mother's, and trimmed it with a flounce of green tissue paper that rustled most delightfully when she walked. Charlotte, in spite of her blue eyes, had to be Rebecca, and Randolph made a splendid Knight Templar. He had a long cloak of white tissue paper, with a light blue Maltese cross on the back of it, and in his cap he wore white and blue plumes. As I remember him, I think he would have made a better Lohengrin than Templar, but at the time, we thought his costume very suitable and very fine. Peyton was curiously obstinate. There were no very nice people left, it is true, but Randolph and I offered to give up either the Templar or Ivanhoe. However Peyton stuck to it and would be Sir Walter Scott. We represented to him that he could not be Sir Walter Scott, as he did n't come into the book once, but Peyton was whimsical and would have it that without Sir Walter, the rest of us would be nowhere at all, and that he had to come to keep the rest of us in existence. This seemed out-and-out nonsense to Randolph, and it was even somewhat of a strain on my own loyalty. We neither

of us had the wit to see that Peyton was by all odds the deepest philosopher in the pentagon.

Peyton had his way, however, and when he appeared in riding boots and jacket, whip in hand, and attended by two great hunting dogs from the plantation, he made a capital master of Abbotsford, and proved to be quite the star of the occasion. His talk was so droll that I thought my grandfather Percyfield would have hurt himself with laughing. Peyton spoke of us and our affairs as if we were so many dolls, and could hear nothing of what was said. He speculated as to whether he had better kill the Templar off and make Ivanhoe fall in love with Rebecca. Then he discussed the events of the tourney just as if they might have turned out other than they did. We were all so taken aback by this high-handed behavior on the part of our usually shy and complaisant Peyton, that even Margaret became a puppet, and the game was all in Peyton's hands.

My grandfather Percyfield was delighted. He leaned over to my mother and said, "We are making progress, are we not?" My mother smiled and nodded.

I noticed from the very first that Margaret showed an astonishing familiarity with Hereford Hall. Often she would tell me where things were that I did not know myself. For some time she evidently thought that Hereford Hall was the name of our place in Pennsylvania. But Charlotte and I frequently spoke of Uplands, and so the two places must have got pretty well mixed up to Margaret. Children seldom

explain things. They take it all for granted. The other child must put two and two together and reach such conclusions as he may. It was this that made my grandfather Percyfield contend that children are better teachers than are the grown-up people, and always follow the most advanced German method.

One day it suddenly became clear to Margaret that by Hereford Hall we meant our New Orleans home. "Why, this is not Hereford Hall," she exclaimed, in high disdain, "this is Arlington. My grandfather named it so, himself." I maintained stoutly that it *was* Hereford Hall. "Well," said Margaret, proudly, "who should know the better, we who have been born here, or a stranger?" Then I could see that she was sorry to have said anything.

So the little mystery about our place was solved. It was Margaret and her mother who were our landlords. But later, we could not help knowing the rest of the story. The old mansion, it seems, was so covered with mortgages that all the rent went to the holders of these papers, and none to our neighbors in the cottage. It was hard for them to see strangers in their old home, and especially Northerners, for the home, like all the rest, had gone through devotion to the Lost Cause. This was the reason that Mrs. Ravenel came so seldom to the Hall, and that it had been so difficult at first to get acquainted with them.

Once, when Margaret was sitting on the sofa in the drawing-room, she looked at me for some time, and

then said, abruptly, "No; I could never marry a Yankee."

"Well," said I, hotly, "ladies usually wait until they are asked;" and in a minute I would have given my pony not to have said it.

Margaret came over and kissed me very gently, — a most unusual thing for her, — and said, "Don't be vexed, John, you can't help it." For the moment, I fear me, I was not entirely loyal to my good grandfather Marston and the Federal cause, for just then I should much have liked not to be a Yankee.

We had our little squabbles, Margaret and I, and sometimes a tiny storm even passed over the pentagon, but on the whole, I doubt whether there were in all the world five happier children than we were.

In the late spring we went back to Uplands, my mother, my grandfather Percyfield, and Charlotte and I. Pompey and Susan came with the most of our belongings a day or two later. Arlington, or Hereford Hall, as I must still call it, never looked more beautiful. To me it was like paradise lost. The fresh blossoms and greenery covered up the shabbiness of the old mansion and turned it into a veritable bower. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, the air was full of life. But the household itself was very sad, and no one save my brave old grandfather Percyfield made the least attempt to conceal the fact. As for myself, I thought my heart would break. Not even the fact that I kissed Margaret a great many times, and that she put her arms around me and kissed me, could

bring much comfort. It was almost as hard parting with Peyton. I loved the boy in a way as deeply as I loved Margaret, and we had lived in such intimate comradeship that it was like giving up a part of myself to leave him. Poor Aunt Viney was loud in her lamentations when she came to say good-by to Charlotte and me, but she loved my beautiful mother best of all. Aunt Viney covered my mother's hand with kisses, and said, brokenly, "Oh, honey, I mos' wish you 'd nevah 'a' come. I declar' to gracious I do, fo' I'll nevah see yo' agen, nevah agen." Then Aunt Viney threw her apron up over her head and crept off to her own quarters.

Mrs. Ravenel, I think, was the only one who was glad to see us go. She had suffered so deeply for the Confederacy that she never quite forgave us for being Yankees. She was a gentle, well-bred woman, but she lived wholly in the past with her dead husband and father, and this hostility to us was, I think, only a subtle part of her loyalty to them. Mrs. Ravenel would not let Margaret promise to write to me, or even to Charlotte, but put us off by saying that doubtless we would be back again the following winter.

But we never went back, and I have never again seen one of the people who made that winter in New Orleans such a red-letter time in our lives.

Many things happened at Uplands. I went to Harvard, and later, Charlotte was at Bryn Mawr. Then my gallant old grandfather Percyfield died, courteous and brave to the last, and after that came

the sudden tragedy of my mother's death. We heard nothing of the Ravenels except a stray rumor that they had recovered most of their property, and were again established at Arlington. But I never for an instant forgot Margaret, or Randolph or Peyton. Curiously enough, neither Randolph nor Peyton grew up in my mind. I thought of them, and do still, as little boys, just as I left them at New Orleans. Randolph has become a trifle vague, but the dear Peyton remains a very real presence. Many a little boy have I loved and gone out of my way to serve, simply because of a chance resemblance to Peyton. I had such an encounter once when I was at Zürich, working out the geological *arbeit* that was to make me a doctor of philosophy. It was one Sunday morning. I was climbing the steep hill to the west of Niederurnen, and noticed a man and boy some distance from the path. I spoke to them, as I always did to the peasants whom I met, but they were so earnest in their talk that they did not see me. I went on through the wood, the path growing steeper and steeper all the time. Finally I got quite out of breath, and had to sit down on a large stone to rest. The man and boy came up the path and found me there. They stopped and spoke with me in very friendly fashion. The man could speak German, but the little boy, whose name was Fridolin, spoke only the Swiss dialect, and so the man obligingly acted as our interpreter. After a moment, the man said to me, "Wert thou not going up the mountain?" "Oh, yes!" said I, "but I am afraid that I shall not

be able to go as fast as you do." "In that case," said he, with a courtesy that would have done credit to Lord Chesterfield, "we will go as slowly as thou."

We had an hour's climb, and a very pleasant one, too, for at every step I was getting more and more attached to Fridolin. I showed him my compass and my geological hammer, and the little instrument I have for measuring the dip of the rock. Our path ended in one of those wild little valleys common enough in the lower Alps, and especially in the region between the Linth and the Sihl. It was only used in summer, and the rude little chalet, that we saw at some distance, was Fridolin's summer home. It was already ten o'clock, but not an animal or a person was to be seen. The rich, green pasturage that crunched under our feet as we walked through it had apparently no tenants. But I was soon undeceived. My peasant asked if I should not like to see their fine cattle, and took me into a long, stone stable. Fridolin would not come in, but left us at the door. I gave him a piece of silver as an *andenken*. He thanked me shyly, and ran off to the chalet without saying good-by. I was curiously disappointed. However, I followed the peasant into the stable, and had to share his enthusiasm, for I saw a lot of beasts finer than anything that had ever graced our own barns at Uplands, and my grandfather Percyfield prided himself on his stock. It seems that they do not let the cattle out until the dew is off the grass, and this accounted for the deserted appearance of the valley, and also perhaps for

the splendid condition of the animals. When we came out of the stable, I was surprised to find Fridolin waiting for us. Something evidently had disappointed him. He had gone to seek me a flower. His garden consisted of several boxes fastened up in the trees, so as to be out of the reach of the goats, but though Fridolin had scrambled up to every box, he could not find me a single flower, for it was still too early. He had come back to tell me, and also to say good-by. I was quite touched by this little attention, and left the child most unwillingly. I took myself to task for being a soft-hearted, foolish fellow. Then it suddenly flashed over me that Fridolin resembled Peyton. In reality, I had been saying good-by again to my little playfellow, my angel brother, and that accounted for the pain.

It was the same at Florence. If you remember, there is a picture there of Endymion sleeping. It hangs directly over the door in that celebrated octagonal chamber in the Uffizi. It was painted by Guercino, an artist that I greatly love, for in all of his people, — saints, madonnas, shadow folk, — there is a human tenderness so sweet and touching that it more than makes up for any technical deficiencies of line or color. I used always to go to Endymion every day I went to the gallery. It was the second picture I visited. I did not know for several days why I hung over it so persistently: it is a veritable portrait of Peyton.

But there is another picture — it is in the Pitti —

that I always visited first. It is a madonna of Murillo's, not the madonna of the rosary, but the other one that hangs near it on the same wall. It is the only picture in all the world before which I should like to kneel and pray. The sweet face of the madonna is in reality the face of my beautiful mother. You will not blame me that I often speak to her aloud, as people do when they pray. I have a copy of the picture in my room at Uplands, one of those soft carbon prints, such as you can buy in Florence, and it is the best portrait of my mother that we have.

The galleries of Europe are curious places, at once haunting, ecstatic, painful, for in them are hung the portraits of every friend ever we had, and even of most of our acquaintances. Margaret is the central figure in a celebrated old picture in the Louvre, and Charlotte's laughing eyes are on every canvas that ever Madame Le Brun painted.

But while Randolph and Peyton always remain boys in my thought and never grow an inch taller or a year older, Margaret has ever been a progressive figure. Her image has a way of slipping back in point of time to the long, down-falling hair, and the familiar blue gown made in the sailor fashion, but her intelligence, her spirit, has grown along with mine. Much has happened to her. She has been to two great universities; she has wandered over half the globe; she has seen the chief galleries of Europe; she has listened to many a grand symphony and opera on both sides of the water; she has read a library of

books; she knows a little German; she speaks French and Italian; she has studied geology, and has dabbled a little in philosophy, and even in mysticism, — in a word, she has done all that I have ever done. But she is very far from being a mere projection of myself. If she were only that, I should not at all love her. On the contrary, she has a distinct personality. The reaction from all this experience is different in her, for she is a woman. It is curious that she should have so much personality. There are times, such as to-night, when it seems impossible that she is merely a dream woman, so real is she. But I am just as conscious of this distinct personality as I am of the sweet smell of her hair, or the depth of her eyes.

Even Margaret's opinions are different from mine. Sometimes I defer to them, and occasionally I resist them, as being perhaps not so good as mine. You see, Margaret is more practical and objective than I am, and always sees the immediate bearing of the matter in hand. I think she is also a little less religious than I am, or perhaps I ought to say that she is more conventional in such matters, and sticks much nearer to the prayer-book than I do. I am conscious of a greater spiritual daring, a deeper assurance in divine matters than I have ever been able to give to her.

It may seem strange that I can speak in this positive manner about a dream woman, about the ideal Margaret, but you must remember that she has been my playfellow, my comrade, for over a dozen years

now. Sometime, and I find her, she is to be my wife.

By this time Margaret must be about twenty-six and a woman quite. And I am getting on towards twenty-eight, or rather twenty-nine. The real Margaret Ravenel may not be at all like my dream Margaret. The difference might even shock me. I do not allow myself to think of it. My own Margaret may even bear another name, but I should call her Margaret: I am sure of that. I never go out of my way to seek her, for that would be useless. Indeed I am almost a fatalist in the matter. Is it not the dear Emerson who says, "The friend that thou art seeking is also seeking thee."

I have met many charming women in the past six or eight years — having a charming sister helps one to it — and one would have thought that being a "philosopher *and* a man of sentiment," as Miss Polyhymnia has it, I might have fallen in love some time since. I have loved some of these charming women in a gentle, brotherly way, but the great love, the grand passion, has always been for Margaret. If I never find her, I shall have to die a lonely old bachelor, but that would be infinitely better than marrying anybody else.

Sometimes I wonder whether I should recognize Margaret, if she happened not to have prominent cheek bones, and an oval, almost triangular face, and sparkling dark eyes, and sweet-smelling, chestnut hair; and when I think that, the tricksy moonlight brings again into the chair opposite to me a little girl in a blue

frock, made after the sailor fashion, and the hot feeling in my heart is a curious mixture of pain and pleasure.

The dinner bell is late in ringing to-night, but even then it comes too soon. When one has had a happy childhood, and is still happy, the moonlight is a charming thing.

CHAPTER IV

ILLUSIONS

It is my habit, when I am away from home, to lock my door of a night. It is not my habit, however, to search the closets, or like the old ladies in Cranford, to roll a ball under the bed to find out whether there is a man there. Indeed my room here at the Château is so big that I should be much put to if I had to go the rounds every night.

When, therefore, I woke up the other night and found a man in my room, I remembered having locked my door, and concluded that hereafter I had better investigate the wardrobe and look under the dressing-table before I went to bed, provided, of course, that I came out of the present adventure with a whole skin, and did not have my throat cut then and there. It was a short, heavily-built man of rather dark complexion. He was some distance away from the bed, and stood regarding me in no unfriendly way, but rather with an air of distinct interest, as much as to say, "Well, by all that 's good, what have we here?" If he saw me at all clearly, he must have read the same expression on my own face, for I think I may say that I was equally, or even more astonished. I sat up in bed, — more quickly, I suspect, than I do of a morning,

— and reached over to my little night table for a match. Whatever the adventure, I wanted to have a little light on it. I remember that the match burned very slowly, it was one of those foul sulphur matches, and it seemed an interminable time before I finally had my candle lighted. Then I thought to have a good look at my assailant, or my guest, whichever he should turn out to be, and discover his purpose.

But there was no one there.

I peered into the gloom of my big apartment as far as the light of a single candle would let me, and listened with both my good ear and my game ear, — I could neither see nor hear the faintest trace of any visitor. Then, of course, I realized that it was an illusion. I have been wakened so many scores of times in just the same way that I blew out my candle in disgust, quite vexed to have taken the matter so seriously. But then I made excuses to myself, for this was the first nocturnal visitor that I had had at the Château, and I was unprepared. There used to be a taller man, with a reddish Vandyke beard, and a long black cloak, who came to see me several times last winter. I always suspected him of being a painter. But that was at Uplands, before we went into town.

About a week later my short, dark man came again, and this visit pleased me still less than the first one. He stood alongside my bed, and was even stooping over me. As before, he wakened me out of a sound sleep, which I always hold to be a great impertinence, unless you have something very impor-

tant to say to a person. But my visitor had nothing at all to say. Apparently he wanted only the pleasure of a good look at me, which being a homely man, and well on towards thirty, I had never esteemed any very great privilege. This time he was dressed in black, evidently velvet, from the way it absorbed the light. The first time he had worn a doublet of green and blue plaid. He was so short and so stoutly built that I mistook him for a peasant, though the plaid would seem to indicate that he was one of Scotland's forebears come to see what she was up to, and had got into the wrong room. When my guest came attired in velvet, however, I knew at once that he could be none other than that particular duke of Savoy who had so often claimed my thought, and that the blue and green plaid was merely a hunting doublet. Could he be looking for his Margherita, I wonder; but no, I liked to think of them as united, this couple whose nuptial chamber I am occupying, and whose little son was born in this very room, and looked out of the same windows that now give entrance to the moonlight and to dreams.

When I mentioned my nocturnal visitor at the table, there were various conjectures as to the purpose of his visit. England, with the instinct of her commercial island, would have it that the duke wished to tell me where some treasure was buried. He certainly owed me something handsome, after twice wakening me out of a sound sleep, for on both occasions I had much ado to get to sleep again.

But apparently the duke's interest is satisfied, for he comes no more, and I am left alone with the darkness and the silence in my great chamber. Sometimes I quite wish that he would come, especially if he would speak to me. Of course, it would be in old-time language, but I think I could manage it, though I might have to say to him, as I do so often to the peasants, "Speak slowly, if you please." It would be a relief to see the duke, for since his visits I have been curiously unable to sleep. I practice usually until midnight, and one would think that I ought to sleep, going to bed at that late hour. I lie perfectly still. I am warm and comfortable, quite happy and contented, but I sleep not. On the contrary I am more wide awake than at any hour of the day, and I have a curious feeling that something is happening that I have not the wit to discern.

This wakefulness on my part quite distresses the kind Châtelaine. She has placed my bed in different positions, so that my head may be to the north, to the south, to the east, to the west, but it is all in vain. The trouble evidently is not with the earth currents, and no amount of careful orientation will exorcise it. I don't like to think that Savoy resents my being here, for he pleases me, this old fellow, with his velvet doublet and his lover's heart. I am quite sure that we should be cronies, if he would only speak.

But these shadow people of mine never do speak. They are such a silent crew that I am beginning to lose interest in them. Charlotte says they are trying

to teach me the virtue of silence. She has a theory that I talk too much. But if this be their mission it is quite time they got discouraged, for I have been under tutelage to them ever since I was a small boy. Not once have they spoken. At first they used to frighten me. I mistook them for robbers. But that was very foolish, for they were commonly old men, often with long, silvery beards and benign faces, not the sort of person to be interested to go a-burgling. But these old fellows were persistent. They would come twice, even three times the same night, always rousing me from a sound sleep. They were much less considerate than my grandfather Percyfield. The first time I would sit up in bed and stare at the old man until he faded. The second time I would demand angrily what he wanted. The third time I would spring out of bed and rush over to the corner to see if I could not lay hands on him. But I would find nothing.

I do not know what theory my grandfather Percyfield had about these illusions, but he always discouraged my talking about them. If I did casually mention that I had seen " some one " the night before, he was pretty sure to look into my occupations even more carefully than usual, to see if I were studying too hard or reading too much. When these investigations showed only normal activity on my part, I remember that my grandfather Percyfield would arrange some outing that would involve good, hard, physical exercise, and tire me out as thoroughly as he dared. Then I would have no visitors for some weeks.

The winter we spent in New Orleans these visitors were particularly numerous, but they never came the nights that Peyton slept with me. I spoke about them even less than usual, for I was old enough to see that it annoyed my grandfather Percyfield. Once I told Margaret about them, but she looked so awed and shrank away from me so that, hot little lover that I was, you may be sure I never mentioned them to her again. She must have told Aunt Viney about it, however, for the old woman used to question me furtively, and once when she was watching us at our play I heard her say to herself: "He 'd make a grand voodoo, Marsa John would. To think o' the child a-seein' speerits already. I 'd be plum scared to death ef I was to see one, I declar' to gracious I would."

I fancy that many children have similar experiences, or much more curious ones, but do not speak of them, either from a fear of being laughed at, or from a notion that they are quite common experiences, and that all people have them. The belief that one is peculiar is a disease of early adolescence, and seldom afflicts either children or grown people. The first are too ignorant, the others too wise. I always prick up my ears when I hear children speak of their mental experiences, and question them as far as I dare, but I try to stop far short of the line of self-consciousness, for I hold with my grandfather Percyfield that no amount of knowledge would be justified if you had to pay this price for it. I can see now how tremendously careful he was to guard Charlotte and me from

it. I think it was one reason why he did not want us to go to school. He wanted to keep us children just as long as he could. And now I am deeply thankful to him for it. I can see that in so many ways I am still a boy, frankly happy, frankly affectionate, and, please God, I mean to remain so till the end.

This habit of seeing people at night does not at all run in the family. At least I don't know of any cases. Charlotte used rather to envy me my experiences. She never had one of these illusions in her life — that is, never but once, and then it was so unique that both of us, if the truth be told, were a little bit frightened. It was while we were studying at Zürich. The winter semester had just ended, and we were going into Italy the next day for our spring vacation. We both went to bed in a state of high excitement, for we had never been to Italy, and we were both wild to go. Charlotte's sleeping-room was next to mine, and it was agreed that I should knock on her door when I thought it was time for us to be getting up, — the St. Gotthard train went rather early in the morning. I had the matter so much on my mind that I got awake considerably earlier than necessary. It was just six o'clock, and I was not to call Charlotte until seven. But I was afraid to go to sleep lest I should not waken in time. As I lay there waiting, the thought suddenly came to me as to whether I should be frightened if I were to see my grandfather Percyfield standing at the foot of my bed. It seemed an altogether foolish thought,

and I dismissed it as quickly as I could, but being careful to assure myself that I should not be in the least bit frightened. I am not at all superstitious, and regard signs and omens as little as did Queen Emma when she threw her slippers into Kilauea. At seven I called Charlotte, and we both dressed and went upstairs to breakfast. Our sleeping-rooms were *en parterre*, and we had *pension* on the second *étage*. It was a scramble to get off, for the droschke was late in coming for us; but, driving down to the station, we had a chance to draw our breath, and Charlotte said to me: "I had such an odd experience this morning! I could n't sleep, and while I was lying there in bed I saw grandfather Percyfield sitting in a chair near the foot of the bed, and such a look of distress on his face as I have never seen in all my life. Do you think, kin, that he can be ill?"

"What time was it?" I asked.

"It was just six o'clock," said Charlotte. "I looked at my watch a moment before. I was afraid you might oversleep."

I am not ashamed to confess that I was startled. When I told Charlotte about my own experience, it took the combined force of Harvard and Bryn Mawr to keep us from being sadly worried. We watched the mail anxiously for the next two weeks, and when the date of the home letters passed the day of our crossing the St. Gotthard without bringing us any bad news, we were both secretly much relieved. Then it was that Charlotte, the practical one, sat down and

wrote a full account of the matter to my grandfather Percyfield. She demanded to know what wicked thing he had been doing at that particular hour to make his devoted grandchildren so unhappy on his account. I can imagine the glee with which my grandfather Percyfield wrote back to her: "My dear Hypatia" — he called Charlotte this in deference, he said, to her vast erudition — "My dear Hypatia: Making allowance for the six hours' difference in time between Switzerland and Pennsylvania, I can say with reasonable certainty that at the fatal moment described so touchingly in your letter, I was blissfully sleeping in my own bed, in my own room, at Uplands. I may add that I was doubtlessly sleeping unusually well, for I had been outdoors most of the previous day, giving Peter instructions about the spring planting. But I can easily explain your experience. It was your evil conscience at having written so seldom to your lonely old grandfather — only one letter a week, and at most not over eight pages."

After that we were careful to send letters by both the Wednesday and the Saturday steamers, and to make the letters of goodly length. For once, I think my grandfather did not altogether disapprove of illusions. Charlotte has never seen another illusion, unless indeed before Frederic spoke she may have seen the ghosts of rival maidens, but if so, she never confided the fact to me. When my brave grandfather Percyfield did come to die, the event found us all as unprepared as people generally are for any great sorrow.

But my own habit of seeing people at night has kept up with a persistence worthy of a better cause. The winter after we went home from Zürich, the shadow people came in swarms. Charlotte and I had expected to stop at Zürich for two years, simply returning to Uplands for the summer. The town house had been rented for the two years, as my mother and my grandfather Percyfield preferred to remain at Uplands all winter. However, I found it entirely possible to finish my studies and get my degree of doctor of philosophy at the end of the first year, and so Charlotte and I trotted home, the maiden nothing loath, I think, for absence had made her fancy set in a certain direction more strongly than she had realized before. But the people who had our town house refused to give it up until the lease expired, and as Charlotte was quite bent on spending the winter in town, my grandfather Percyfield very good-naturedly hired a furnished house for four months. I think my mother and my grandfather Percyfield would have preferred the comfort and quiet of Uplands, for the year spent there had made them love country life even in winter. It was difficult to find a furnished house for so short a time, and for lack of something better we had to settle on an old place on South Broad Street, just before you come to Pine. It had been something of a house in its day, but was already far past its prime. I had the third-story front room, and one would have thought that the noise there had frightened away both illusions and sleep. Broad Street

at that time was paved with Belgian blocks, and was not desirable for residence. However, we had hardly got settled in the place before I began to have nocturnal visitors at a rate that was absolutely annoying. Not only old men and young men, but even whole families came to visit me. Before that I had never seen more than one person at a time. And the bother was that they came night after night, until I got into the way of expecting them. I would go to sleep without the least trouble, but after what seemed to me about half an hour, I was sure to be wakened. Sometimes I would find as many as four persons regarding me with the utmost attention. One night, I remember, a gentle, sweet-faced woman stood at the foot of the bed, and near her a young man who was perhaps her son. A young girl was by the bureau, and over in the corner, my customary old man. It was a curious counterpart of our own family group. But not one of the faces was familiar, nor do I remember ever to have seen any of them since. The four of them were absolutely staring at me. It was quite enough to make a sensitive man waken. When I sat up and demanded impatiently to know what they wanted, they showed not the slightest embarrassment, but simply dissolved where they stood, — not a word, not a gesture, nothing but that intense regard directed always towards myself.

These illusions are well bred in one respect, — they never turn their backs to me. In fact they never even show me their side faces. Nor do they investigate my

belongings. It would be a very subtle compliment if I could ever find them looking over my manuscripts, but apparently these have no interest for the shadow people. They always look at me directly, square and full in the face, a regular broadside of illusion.

They have another courtesy which makes them less uncanny than they would otherwise be, — they always stick to the floor, and have a proper respect for the furniture. If one of them stands at the foot of my bed, I see only that part of him which comes above the footboard. It would be much more disturbing if the shadow people plastered themselves over the walls and furniture like so many posters. I am touched by this observance of the conventionalities. Only once was it broken. Then I woke to find the body of a man projecting from the headboard above me, the face, as usual, regarding me intently. I confess that this displeased me. It was at the old house on South Broad Street, but it never happened a second time.

About that time, it chanced that we had two callers one evening who stopped with us rather late. One was a beautiful Southern woman, Mrs. Foster, who admired Charlotte very much, and was incidentally a friend of mine. The other was an old gentleman, Dr. Granger, who was somewhat interested in psychology. Poor Charlotte was growing perceptibly sleepy. We had turned down the lights and were sitting around the open fire. It does make you sleepy to do this, if there is nothing very exciting to keep you awake, and Charlotte had nodded several times. By

way of coming to the rescue, I told Mrs. Foster and Dr. Granger about my shadow people, for they had just made a great record, coming every single night for two weeks running. Both of our friends were much interested, Dr. Granger making a few rough notes as I went on with the account, and Mrs. Foster looking at me with such a long focus to her eyes that she seemed to be seeing all the visitors that I was telling her about. When I finished speaking, Mrs. Foster said to me, very earnestly, —

"You must not see these things, Mr. Percyfield, you really must not; it is not good for you. You are abnormally sensitive. I am afraid you are working too hard. You ought to take more exercise. Really, my friend, you *must* not see them."

This fiction on the part of my friends that I must be working too hard started when I was a youngster, and has followed me all through my life. Even my clear-sighted grandfather Percyfield fell a victim to it. I am occupied all the time, of course, for it would be very stupid not to be, but in one sense I never do a stroke of work. My occupations are all of my own choosing, the things I want to do, and that is not work, it 's the most enlightened sort of play. Mrs. Foster's earnestness surprised me, and I said, —

"Why not, Mrs. Foster? They seem well-bred people. I have nothing against them save that they waken me out of a sound sleep, and do not answer when they are spoken to. Who do you suppose they are, modern Trappists sworn to silence?"

"Hardly that," said Mrs. Foster. "You will perhaps not agree with me, but they are the astral bodies of people who have lived in this old house before you came to it. You ought not to see them. It is only when you are in a hypersensitive state that you have the power."

"It must have been a boarding-house, then," said Charlotte, "for John sees such a crew of them."

I laughed softly, but I did not express my full incredulity, thinking that it would hardly be polite. I do not myself at all believe in these astral bodies of Mrs. Foster.

My mode of coming to the rescue was a conspicuous failure, for both Dr. Granger and Mrs. Foster remained until midnight. When they left, Mrs. Foster said to me with the same earnestness, "Remember, you are not going to see any one to-night;" and I answered gayly, "You must keep them off, then."

And sure enough, I had no visitors that night, or, indeed, for about two weeks after. The following day I had a note from Mrs. Foster, written in the same earnest spirit, and urging me not to see the shadow people, — quite as if I had elected to be wakened every night. In truth, I was very glad to be rid of them. The next time I saw Mrs. Foster I told her they had gone, and asked what she had done to frighten them, and whether, like David, she played the harp when the cloud pressed heavily on Saul. You remember that Mr. Browning has told the story very beautifully in his poem of Saul. But Mrs. Foster only laughed.

However, either the harp-playing ceased, or it grew to be no longer effective. The shadow people never came back in such full force as they did on South Broad Street, and now they have the decency to come one or at most two at a time, but they have never ceased to come, not even, as I have been telling you, in this delightful old Château on the shore of Léman.

The duke of Savoy, in his plaid or in his velvet, is a very distinct figure, though no more so than the humble fellow who once investigated me in a sleeping-car out in the Rocky Mountains. I was going from Colorado Springs to Salt Lake City. The train was crowded. I could get no berth in the regular sleeper, and indeed hardly a seat in the ordinary coach. Some wedding-journeyers whom I had seen at the Springs advised me, since I could not very well stop off at Glenwood, to take the "tourist" sleeper that is put on at Leadville. I had never heard of a tourist sleeper, and being a Philadelphian, I had our traditional prejudice against the unknown. This feeling is very strong at home. Some of my fellow townsmen do not even want to die. So I merely said that I would look at the tourist sleeper. I found a very shabby car, with cane seats and bare floor, and "second-class" written very large all over it. It was not the sort of an affair that the Percyfields commonly travel in. I stuck up my nose and said I 'd have none of it. But when night came on, the old men in my car were taking off their shoes, and the chicken bones gathered on the floor,

and the babies began and continued to howl, poor little souls, and altogether things became pretty bad. I was less high and mighty than I had been at Leadville, and went back to the tourist sleeper to say that I would graciously take a berth. By that time all the lower berths were taken, which served me quite right, and I was obliged, in a very humble frame of mind indeed, to climb into an upper berth. I must say, parenthetically, that I found it very clean and comfortable. I went to sleep at once, for all day long I had been staring at the Royal Gorge and other bits of remarkable scenery, and I was tired. But very soon I was wakened by finding a rough-looking fellow bending over me. He seemed to be standing on the edge of the lower berth, and had parted the curtains so that the upper part of his body was literally in my berth. His hands rested on the edge of the wooden side-piece. He wore a checked shirt made of coarse cotton cloth; they call it hickory in the South. The sleeves were rolled up to the elbows, disclosing hairy, freckled arms. The shirt was open at the throat, showing more hair and freckles. The man himself was good-natured enough looking. He had a large, rough face, with sandy beard and reddish hair. I took him to be a miner, or perhaps merely a prospector. In spite of his good nature, however, his intrusion seemed to me a piece of very great impertinence. I reached instinctively for my coat to see that my wallet was still safe. I had put the coat between me and the back of the bunk. Then I turned to demand an explanation, —

the curtains were fastened on the inside and fell in straight folds: there was no one there.

I confess that this mining person falls in very creditably with Mrs. Foster's theory. He was just such a looking fellow as had probably slept in that bunk of mine in the tourist sleeper not many nights before. Any image stamping itself on the entangled ether would be much more likely to be a prospector than a Percyfield.

I have myself no very satisfactory theory about these illusions, except to believe, of course, that they have existence only in my own head. I fancy other people have them too, though I never happen to have met any one with such a large circle of dumb admirers. Charlotte says they are a stupid lot never to tell me anything, and half believes, I think, that she could manage them to more purpose. I should be very glad to give her the chance, but apparently the shadow people have no mind to be passed around.

I think the whole thing is due to a visualizing type of mind. When one sees the world in a series of vivid pictures, a gayly colored panorama, it is easily thinkable that on wakening suddenly from sleep and before the faculties are well in hand, there should be this projecting of images on the screen of the physically seen. It is odd, however, that these illusions should waken me out of sound sleep by that sense of personal intrusion, and odd, too, that they should always obey gravitation and optics; that is, that they should always stand on the floor, and should always respect the fur-

niture so scrupulously. In the matter of costume, they follow the fashion of the country. In Rome, I see peasant women and their children in gay Roman scarfs; in Colorado, a prospector; in Switzerland, a gentleman in sober doublet. But in spite of these minor difficulties, I never for a moment doubt the subjective character of my visitors.

One experience, however, I did have, that I have never been able to explain, and that remains to this day a mystery. I was sitting one evening in front of the table in my study at Uplands. It was the large garret room that I have already mentioned. I had been reading all the latter part of the evening and had been tremendously interested in the content of my book. I was not, I think, at all sleepy. I stopped my reading chiefly because I heard the hall clock downstairs strike twelve, and I knew that I ought to be in bed. I shut the book, and sat for a moment in my large armchair, with my hands up to my head. Quite without warning or preface of any kind, I suddenly found myself, that is, my thinking self, entirely outside of my body and entirely detached from it save by a slender bond on the left side. I saw my body sitting there in the armchair, complete from head to foot, sharp and distinct, save the slight obscureness on the left side. And then I saw around the body, projecting from it six or eight inches, I should say, a slightly luminous gray cloud. It had the enlarged form of the body and enveloped it completely. I was greatly astonished at what I saw, and particularly at

the luminous gray cloud. I cried out, — but whether aloud or to myself, I know not, — "It is the Soul." I let my hands drop into my lap; I was sitting in the armchair before my study table.

The United Kingdom are collectively interested in these illusions and ask repeatedly if the duke has made another visit. They care more for him than they do for my Colorado prospector. Mademoiselle de Candolle is interested in quite a different way. She looks at me kindly and says in her low, gentle voice, "Monsieur, the veil between you and the unseen world is slight. You have a peculiar organization, very sensitive. You must guard it."

But for myself, I do not know about these things.

CHAPTER V

IN THE DRAWING-ROOM

It is the twelfth of December, the fête of the Escalade, when the Genevois celebrate the repulse of the Savoyards some three hundred years ago. By a curious irony of fate, the present Savoyards fetch down fat turkeys from Haute-Savoie, and sell them to their ancient enemies, and present richer neighbors, the Genevois. It is a little hard to have to supply the feast with which to make merry over your own discomfiture.

We are much too patriotic at the Château to let the day pass unobserved. We celebrate it in our own way. Instead of masks and discordant trumpets, we dress for dinner and decorate the Château with the last of our roses and chrysanthemums. We twine ivy and hang mistletoe over the fireplace. Where we can, we put a touch of red, the flaming berries of the mountain ash, and great branches of cardinal maple leaves. The Château is a gay sight, this fête of the Escalade. Mademoiselle de Candolle wears her purple velvet waist with the ruby-red jewel of her great-grandmothers. The United Kingdom is in full dress: Ireland in an ancient mauve-colored silk, with her triple string of pearls; England majestic in black

velvet and old lace; Scotland problematical in a white gown with gold threads. I have put on my best dress suit, and in my buttonhole display a touch of home in the crimson button of my dear university. We have a double allowance of candles on the dinner table, and on the side tables there are several lamps burning. It is a pretty sight.

We are all of us in holiday mood, and drink our toasts in high spirits, first to the Châtelaine and to the eternal liberty of her brave Switzerland, and then to the United Kingdom and to their beloved sovereign. Finally it is my turn, and England, with a truly charming graciousness, begs that I will frame the toast myself, as they would wish me what I should most wish for myself. I spring to my feet, flushed with something better than wine, and holding my glass on high, cry out, —

"To the Great Republic! May she realize democracy and lead in the federation of the nations."

The ladies rise, too, and drink my toast in all sincerity, these old aristocrats, but it is because they are fond of me rather than of democracy. The Châtelaine alone understands.

Our glasses are large and there is still some good red wine in the bottom of them. I ask a final toast, — "To those we love." We drink in silence, each thinking his own thoughts, I of Charlotte and of Margaret, the elder women of memories, while Scotland looks at me and thinks of heaven knows what bare-legged laird.

After dinner we go into the drawing-room, carrying the lamps and the vases of flowers with us. We distribute them advantageously about the room. Then the heavy red curtains are drawn in front of the great windows and we look as cosy as you please. I can't help wishing that Charlotte were here to see it. The Châtelaine has a glorious fire made on the hearth, not a little tuppenny blaze of dried leaves, and twigs as thick as a slate pencil, but a genuine fire of great oak logs that sends the flames rushing and roaring up the chimney the way they do at Uplands. The drawing-room is absolutely hot; I think it must be at least sixty-five degrees Fahrenheit. It is only in the most distant corners that you can see your breath.

We make a wide circle around the chimney-place, and as master of ceremonies I am allowed to dispose the ladies in chairs that will go well with the color of their gowns. I put Ireland into a pale blue chair with spindling French legs. It just suits her, for I always think of her as pale blue. England goes into a gorgeous highbacked chair, covered with bright red stuff that matches her ruddy cheeks. The seat is high and I insist on adding a footstool. She looks majestic, the very picture of triumphant imperialism. It needs only a lot of squirming, miserable folk under the chair to make the picture complete, but this part of my thought I keep to myself. Scotland goes into the most non-committal chair I can find, one of those that have quite lost their original color and pattern, for I cannot make Scotland out at all. I have no such

trouble with the Châtelaine. I fetch her a solid arm-chair done in a warm, rich green. She fits it perfectly. Then I give a final touch to the lamps, and join the circle myself, with a sigh of large content.

But it seems that my duties are far from being over. England from her height calls over to me, "Do tell us some of your American anecdotes, Mr. Percyfield, one of those coincidences, like the story of Mrs. Lewis's samovar. We must have some bright talk, must n't we, to match the gay picture you have made of us."

A spirit of mischief seizes me, and I answer, "Very well, Madame, your word is law. You have probably heard of my distinguished fellow townsman, Mr. George Washington Childs, — yes, the one who gave the fountain or the window or something or other to Stratford-on-Avon. Well, when he was a little boy, he lived in Baltimore. He was quite poor, I believe, and had to sell newspapers for a living. One day, he received a curious looking penny for one of his papers. It was so curious that he put a little private mark on it before he spent it for a hot bun, wondering whether it would ever come back to him. Well, years afterwards when he had moved to Philadelphia and grown very rich, he had occasion one day to go over to Camden on the ferryboat. The fare is three cents, and Mr. Childs gave the gatekeeper a nickel, — a five-cent piece, you know — and got back two cents in change. Mr. Childs looked carefully at the pennies, and what *do* you think" —

"Well," says England, "I think your friends have

more queer things happening to them than any people I know."

"Yes, it *was* queer," I answer demurely, "but neither penny was the marked one."

"You 're a dreadful man, Mr. Percyfield," says England, trying to look severe, "to take in a couple of old women that way," — no one ever thinks of the Châtelaine as old. "I don't like such nonsense. Tell us a good story, something true."

So I begin again, assuring England that this time the story shall be true.

"Honor bright?" says England.

"Honor bright!" I answer, my hand on my heart; and then I proceed: "I was once walking through the Yellowstone Park. It was the last day of my walk. I left the regular stage road at the Grand Cañon Hotel, at the Falls of the Yellowstone, you know, and took the trail around Mt. Washburn, to Yancey's Camp. It was a matter of about twenty-four miles, and I allowed the whole day for it. After I got clear of the hotel, I did not see a soul until I reached Yancey's at five o'clock that afternoon."

"And were n't you afraid?" asks England.

"Of what?" I ask, looking as much surprised as a dragoon does when you ask him, perchance, if he minds being shot.

"Oh, I don't know. Of Indians, perhaps, or of robbers."

"Not at all," I answer; "Indians are very scarce in America. They have been mostly picked up for

wild west shows and museums. In fact, they are almost as rare as a workingman at a university extension lecture. And as for robbers, they could never afford such a lonely place. I think I was the only man who crossed the trail that year."

"It sounds dreadfully lonely," says England, while Ireland draws her chair perceptibly nearer to the fire.

"It did not seem lonely to me," I answer, enthusiastically; "I never had such a day. It gives me a thrill even to think of it. I was absolutely alone with Nature. It was a red-letter day."

England is still doubtful, and asks nervously, "Did you have a pistol? Were there no wild animals to fear, no panthers or bears or anything of that sort?"

"No, Madame, I never carry a pistol," I answer, "and beyond being a little watchful, I had no fear of the animals. The grizzlies were all up on the ridges trying to keep cool, and I did n't see one. A beautiful silver-haired fox crossed my path, and I saw a couple of deer in the distance, but these, with a fretful porcupine, were the only things stirring. But to go on with my story. After I got several miles out from the hotel, the trail became rather indistinct and scattered, and I began to think that I had been careless not to have brought my compass along. It was in my trunk at Cinnabar. But the compass was Swiss, and rather heavy" — it was the one I had shown to Fridolin — "so I left it behind. A few minutes later I chanced to look down on the trail and there was a little round object shining in the sun. I stooped and

picked it up. It was a compass. Evidently it had fallen from some one's watch chain, for it showed the mark of where a ring had once been attached to it. When I got to Yancey's I made inquiries and found that a company of cavalry officers had gone over the trail on horseback the preceding summer. The compass had been there waiting for me nearly a year."

"How providential!" exclaims Ireland.

"What did your friends say?" asks England. "They must think you lead a charmed life."

"One man in Philadelphia, to whom I told the story, looked at me and said, 'Percyfield, I'm a pretty good liar myself.'"

Ireland and the Châtelaine laugh softly, and Scotland fairly snickers; but England, whose sense of humor is still rudimentary, says gravely, "How very rude. I hope you showed him the compass."

"Unfortunately, Madame, that was impossible. It was stolen from me the following evening."

"Stolen?" cry the four ladies in concert, and even the apathetic Scotland is curious to know how that came to be.

It is a holiday and I might as well tell them the story. It is one of those queer experiences that seldom come to a man in our day, and having come, make him feel that he wants to share it with others, — not egotistically, I think, for I could in no sense be called the hero of the tale, but simply to carry out the Golden Rule, and tell a good story to others as you would like them to tell one to you.

The Châtelaine has another generous log put on the fire; the ladies settle themselves to listen, and I begin. But England must first ask if it is surely a true story, and I assure her, honor bright, that it is. Then Scotland wants to know if it 's pathetic, and if she had better take out her mouchoir. I answer wickedly that it would be to a Scotsman, for I lost two hundred and fifty francs by the adventure. But Scotland completely ignores the thrust, and says, the way she invariably does when any sum of money is mentioned, "Two hundred and fifty francs, that would be a bit over ten pounds, would n't it?"

"We must usually pay for our experience, must n't we?" adds England, by way of comfort. I used to think that these little interrogations on the end of so many of England's sentences required an answer, but I notice that her countrywomen never attend to this conversational fringe, and I have fallen into their way of ignoring it. Then England says, "But please go on, Mr. Percyfield," evidently forgetting that it was she who headed me off in the first place. So I begin again.

"I spent that night at Yancey's Camp" —

"And did you have no adventures there?" interrupts Scotland, with such a fine touch of irony in her voice that it escapes all but myself.

"None to speak of," I reply, imperturbably, "except that the log house was a little noisy. There were some drunken soldiers there, but they were more unkind to themselves than to me." — Charlotte says that

these little moral remarks of mine are not calculated to help on the cause, but Miss Polyhymnia holds that it makes life more picturesque to have it "annotated." — "I thought at first that I was going to have a little trouble, but I got through the night all right. The next morning I walked to the Mammoth Springs Hotel and caught the stage for Cinnabar. There I took the railroad up to Livingston, and at seven o'clock that evening I boarded the eastbound express. It was called an express, but it reminded me of what Mark Twain said about our Swiss trains. He was walking, and got tired, so he took the train, *thereby* losing considerable time. The overland express bowled along at the rate of at least twenty miles an hour. But it was very comfortable, quite like a good hotel on wheels. I had dinner in the dining-car, and got a good lower berth in the sleeper. I was rather tired, for you see I had walked over one hundred and sixty miles in the preceding five days."

"I don't wonder you are thin," says England.

"Slender, if you please, Madame," I suggest, by way of correction, for I like to be called slender, but not thin. England accepts the amendment, and I go on. "I went to bed shortly after dinner, but I did not go to sleep. I lay there thinking how very comfortable I was. It must have been about nine o'clock when the train came to a sudden stop. I lifted my window shade and looked out to see what was the matter. It was bright moonlight, but we were in a low cut, and I could see nothing of the surrounding country, or any

cause for our stopping. A nervous woman in the section ahead of mine called out, 'My God, we 're being held up,' but I did n't for a moment believe her. I thought to myself, 'You poor, nervous thing, you ought not to travel in the West.' Then I pulled down my window shade and thought I would go to sleep. But it turned out that the nervous woman was right, and we were being 'held up.' In a moment I heard a number of pistol shots, and the colored porter cried out to us, 'You 'd better all lie mighty still. If you git up, you may git shot!' I learned afterwards that the porter had been in four hold-ups, three in one year, and had learned to take them calmly. It was my own first experience. I stopped in my berth, as you English would say, but the nervous woman stuck her head out of the window and screamed. It was a silly thing to do and came near to costing us dear. The highwaymen were hammering away at the express car in the front of the train, and the firing we heard was the skirmish between them and the plucky express agent. But one of them, hearing the scream, took his rifle and deliberately fired at the nervous woman's window." —

"How dreadful," cries the Châtelaine.

"Did it kill her?" asks the practical Scotland.

"No, it did n't kill her, but it came near to killing some one else. You see the outlaw was so far front that the train was greatly foreshortened, and the bullet missed the nervous woman's window entirely. It passed through one corner of my own section, and

buried itself in the woodwork just two inches above the head of the man in the section back of me. He dug the bullet out afterwards and took it home with him as a memento of western travel."

"Were n't you frightened?" asks Scotland, and this time without any irony.

"Thoroughly frightened," I answer, quite unabashed. "I had never been under fire before, and it is not a pleasant sensation. You see there is no chance for action. If you lie still you may get shot, and if you get up you may get shot. It is stupid in either case."

"Mon Dieu, what a terrible moment!" says the Châtelaine; "and what *did* you think of?"

"Well, it was curious, but you see I was very full of my walk, and my first thought was that I hoped I should not be shot in the leg and get lamed, so that I could not walk any more."

"And then?" asks England, solemnly.

"Afterwards, I remember hoping that if I got shot at all it would kill me outright, and not give me a nasty wound."

"And are n't you afraid to die?" continues England in the same solemn way. Apparently she thinks that we radicals are great sinners, all of us, and must be covertly apprehensive of our end.

"No, Madame," I answer, simply and honestly, "I am not afraid to die. I am a democrat, and believe in justice, here and later, not crowns for some and hard knocks for the rest, but God's love and truth for all."

England looks at me quizzically, and for a moment there is silence. It is Scotland who breaks it to ask that the story may go on.

"Well," I continue, "there was more firing in the front, and the outlaws finally overcame the express agent. But they could not blow open the safe, and so they decided to go through the train. The word was passed along from car to car, and so we had some time to get ready for them. I was quite willing that they should have my money provided they would leave me my legs and my watch. The watch had belonged to my grandfather Percyfield, and I made up my mind that come what would, I simply could not lose it."

"What did you do with it?" asks the Châtelaine, interested, like all the Genevois, in watches.

"I put it under the mattress. I hid some of my money, too, but afterwards I put all the money back in my wallet and in my pockets, for I was afraid that the outlaws might tear out the berth in case they did not find enough money to satisfy them."

"How could you lie there and wait? What did you do with yourself?" bursts in England.

"Well, for one thing, I almost went to sleep. There was nothing else to do after I had hidden my watch."

"You almost went to sleep!" cries England in the upper register of her voice. "Mr. Percyfield, I don't believe you."

"I did, though. I almost went to sleep. You see it took the outlaws some time to go through the other

cars, and I had been so much in the open air the past few days that by that time I was growing very sleepy. But when the outlaws did finally reach our car, I was anything but sleepy. My heart thumped the way it did when I climbed Pike's Peak. Furthermore, they made a great racket. I never heard such swearing, not even in St. Louis. You could smell sulphur. They made the porter light every single lamp until the car was one blaze of light. Then they went down the aisle, the three of them, one on guard, one dealing with the passengers, and one carrying a sack for the receipt of such vanities as pocket-books, loose change, watches, and jewelry. I was still in bed, and my curtains were down, so I could only judge of what was happening by the noise. I heard the constant command, 'Dig up,' an expression I had never heard before, but which I could readily guess meant to 'shell out,' and this, you know, means to 'hand over.'"

"You have such droll expressions in America," interrupts Ireland.

"However, by some accident, the outlaws passed my section without investigating it, and I was beginning to count myself a very lucky man, for I heard one of them say, 'Well, fellows, let 's be off.' As he turned, his rifle caught in my curtain, and there was I. He dashed the curtains aside and sat down on the edge of the berth with the pleasant remark, 'Here 's a man we have n't done yet.'"

"I do not see how you stood it," says the gentle Ireland; "I should have quite died of fright."

"I had no choice in the matter," I reply; "the inevitable makes us all heroes. And the situation, though not exactly what you would voluntarily elect, was far from being uninteresting. It was quite like a scene out of a dime novel. There was I, a mild-mannered tourist, flat in bed, and there was the heavy villain sitting on the foot of the bed without so much as 'by your leave.' And his appearance added to the picturesqueness of the affair. He had on a rough mask made of burlap, the coarse stuff they use for potato sacks. It came down to his shoulders, and covered his head and face entirely. There were only two little holes for his eyes. He was a regular walking arsenal. Besides the rifle, he had two revolvers and a bowie knife. He could hardly have carried any more weapons. But do you know, on the whole, I think he was more nervous than I, for I had the more powerful weapon. I had society at my back. It might be worsted for the moment, but in the end it is always victorious, while he with his petty firearms was standing out against society. He was very business-like. He went through all my pockets, and made me hand over the wallet from under my pillow. When he came to my vest pocket he took the compass along with the small coins. I did not think of it at the time or I should have asked him to leave that. As it was, my heart was quite in my mouth, for I remembered at the last moment that my watch-key was in that pocket, and I expected to hear him thunder out, 'Where is your watch?' I should have been quite

willing to lie to him about it, but not being in practice, the trouble was to do it successfully. Fortunately I was not put to the test, for his great horny finger scooped out everything else, and left the key safely tucked away in one corner of the pocket. If he had been listening, he could have heard my sigh of relief. As I saw my wallet vanishing, I did remember that it had my ticket to Chicago in it. I had heard great tales of the politeness of these fellows, so I said to the one in front of me, 'You have my ticket to Chicago, and I should like to have that back, if you please.'"

"Really, Mr. Percyfield," breaks in England, "you did n't say that to a robber, did you?"

"Yes, I did, and what is more, he gave it back to me. He opened the wallet, — it 's this one I am carrying now, — took out the bank notes and threw them into the sack of worldly vanities, closed the wallet, and handed it back to me most politely, and I said, 'Thank you,' amused even then at this exchange of courtesies with a gentleman of the road. I have been sorry ever since that I did not talk with him, and find out his point of view about the whole affair. It was an unusual opportunity, and I should never have missed it. Yes, he had a point of view, I am sure of that. I heard afterwards that one of the outlaws refused to rob a train hand, remarking, 'That 's all right. You work for your money.' Evidently they thought that the rest of us did not. It was a great mistake, not talking to him. Well, I was the last man 'done' on the whole train. Then the

robbers took themselves off, but not without giving us a parting salute. As soon as they got on the embankment they sent a volley of shots at our car. I don't think they meant to hurt any of us. I think they only meant to frighten us and discourage pursuit. But the noise was something dreadful. The bullets pattered around on the roof of the car, smashing the ventilators and sending the fragments of glass down into the aisle. It did seem for a moment as if the day of judgment had come. But the train was soon in motion again, and the hold-up was over. Then there was the noise of many voices. Everybody was talking to everybody else and wondering how it all happened, and comparing experiences. The nervous woman was relating her woes in high soprano. I stuck my head out of the curtains. Across the aisle, a rough-looking Montana man had his head sticking out in much the same fashion — reminding me for all the world of the way we children used to play Bluebeard's wives, the winter we lived in New Orleans. You know how frowsy and funny people look after they have been in bed a half an hour and got their hair all mussed up. Montana looked as if he had been in bed a week, but he proved to be a rough diamond. It was not a time to wait for introductions. As soon as he saw my head appear, he said in a hearty way, 'Well, pardner, how did you fare?' I laughed and answered, 'Very badly; they took all I had.' 'Pshaw; I wish I 'd known,' said Montana, 'I would have told you how to manage. How much did you lose?' 'About fifty

dollars,' said I. 'Pshaw; you did n't?' 'Yes, I did,' said I; and then I went on to tell Montana that I had been more anxious to save my watch and my seven-league boots than my money. He had himself only four dollars and eighty-four cents, but he took my loss more to heart than I did. He disappeared back of his curtains, and I thought he was disgusted with me for being such a tenderfoot as to lose everything. In a moment, however, a great rough hand came stealing across the aisle. It was Montana's. Between the thumb and forefinger were two silver dollars, cart-wheels we call them in America. 'Here,' said he, abruptly, 'take that.' Remember, please, that this was nearly half of his own slender purse, and that I had never seen him before in my whole life. I was tremendously touched. I thanked Montana as best I could, telling him that this goodness of his quite redeemed the outrage of the hold-up, and that I would gladly accept the money if he would let me return it later.

"'No,' said he, with an oath, which I think the recording angel took no account of, 'a man in your fix, I want to give it to him.'

"I like to tell this part of the story, for it shows the heroic side of Western life."

"What did you do?" asks the practical Scotland, always alert when any money transactions are mentioned. "Two dollars. That would be eight shillings, would n't it?"

"I took the money, put it under my pillow, and went to sleep."

"How could you?" says Ireland.

"It would have hurt Montana's feelings, if I had not taken the money," I reply, somewhat surprised at her way of looking at it, for the Percyfields have ever been very punctilious in money matters.

"I did n't mean that," Ireland hastens to explain; "I mean how could you go to sleep?"

"There was nothing else to do. Lightning seldom strikes the same tree twice. There was little danger of a second hold-up."

"I believe, Mr. Percyfield, that you have no nerves whatever," is England's comment.

"Indeed I have, as you would soon see, if I drank your English tea of an afternoon as strong as you would like to give it to me. I should soon be a very tottery, trembly old gentleman."

England laughs. She has a little contempt, you know, for my weak tea. Then she adds, "Did you hear how the brigands stopped the train?"

I had never thought of the outlaws as "brigands," and it rather shocked me to think that we had such an article in America. I was slow in answering. "Oh yes, the three men got on the front platform of the baggage car at a little station called Reedy Point, and after the train had pulled out some distance, they adjusted their masks, stood up, and aimed their three rifles at the head of the engineer. Then they called his attention to the fact and told him to stop when he saw a lantern. He very naturally did so, for it was Hobson's choice."

"Was there no resistance?" asks the Châtelaine. It is the night of the Escalade, and the Genevois fighting blood is up.

"Hardly any. The porter in the sleeper back of ours did fire at the robbers, but got such a volley back that the next day his car looked as if it had been through a battle. I never understood before how a few men could hold up a whole trainful of people, but you see you are at a great disadvantage. You have to deal with absolutely desperate men, genuine desperadoes, and you never know how many confederates they have outside. Furthermore, you are in a brightly lighted car while they are under cover of the shadows. Montana told me afterward that he had a loaded pistol under his pillow and that at one moment all three men had their backs to him. 'But I did n't fire,' he added, 'for I did n't know what women and children I might have hit back of them curtains, and then if I had killed all three of 'em, and they had had enough pardners outside, them fellows would have come into this here car and done every man, woman, and child of us, just out of pure revenge.' I respected his temperance. The robbers understood the situation, too. They were playing a losing game in life and were willing to risk all in any mad adventure. But with the rest of us it was different. We were on the winning side. Life was too precious a gift to be thrown away for a few dollars. The robbers were careful not to offer us any personal insult or injury. Had they done that, it would have roused the tiger in

the gentlest of us, and the result would have been too terrible to tell about. But there was another side to it, at once humorous and pathetic. One little woman in another sleeper was so frightened that she hid under her berth and so lost nothing. It happened to be a new sleeper, and the berth was fortunately rather high, so that a small person could just manage to squeeze under it. Then there was an old lady in my own sleeper who was going only a short distance and had but twelve dollars with her. When the outlaw pointed his revolver at her head and told her roughly to 'Dig up,' she handed the money to him, for, as she told me afterwards, she thought that if she had to die, she would rather not die with a lie in her throat."

"Did none of the other passengers manage to save their money?" asks the canny Scotland.

"Yes, several of them had their wits about them. One man got up and wandered about the car, and when ordered to hand over his money, said with great show of indignation, 'How often can you do a fellow, anyway? You 've got all I had.' In reality he had not lost a penny."

"How splendid!" says Scotland, enthusiastically, and Ireland murmurs gently, "It was too shocking that he had to tell such a lie about it."

England looks at me quizzically. "Would you have lied for money, Mr. Percyfield?" she asks.

"Well, it was curious," I answer, "but just a couple of days before the hold-up, I had been going over the whole question in my own mind. I hate a

lie, as much as my grandfather Percyfield did before me, with a blind, unreasoning hatred. And I was asking myself what the theoretical grounds for truth-telling were, and especially whether a man is ever justified in lying. The question was brought home to me, you see, because I met so many lies in the Yellowstone Park, regular whoppers, as we used to say when we were children."

"How was that?" asks the Châtelaine, who takes, you know, a very keen interest in American affairs.

"It was chiefly about the difficulties and the distances. They did not want me to walk."

"Why not?" says Scotland. "It is the cheapest way of traveling, is n't it?"

"That was precisely it. They preferred that I should take the stage, or else hire a couple of saddle horses and a guide."

"I hope you did n't do it," says Scotland, indignantly.

"No, indeed," I answer, "I walked the whole distance. I much preferred it, and I suspected all along that they were telling me fairy stories. There is not the slightest reason why one should n't walk."

"But what did you conclude about the lying?" demands England, with a touch of impatience. I think she rather likes to get at a radical's point of view in such matters.

"I reasoned it out in this way. Savages and less evolved people generally, even fairly well-born children at a certain age, seem to lie naturally. It is a defense

of the weak. But a wider experience of life shows the immense superiority of truth-telling. The prejudice that all right-minded people have for strict truthfulness rests on this large experience. It does not, however, belong to the primal order of things, like gravitation and life and death. Much as we revere truth-telling, we must acknowledge that it is a purely social virtue, and grows out of social and individual experience. The race discovers that progress depends upon reporting things exactly as they are, and that daily life is more successful when people tell one another the exact truth. This, you know, is one of my strong objections to trade, that traders do not tell each other the exact truth. Indeed, they sometimes tell each other pretty big falsehoods. Then in the second place, a man owes it to himself to clarify his own vision, and to look at the world as unblinkingly as possible. He can do this only by the most rigorous, most unrelenting truthfulness. It is this necessity that makes scientific men as a class — and especially geologists," I add laughingly — "such superior moral persons. The worst effect of lying is upon one's self. It takes away the very foundations of the intellectual life, for it robs one of discrimination and clear-sightedness. When one sees less clearly, one knows less clearly; for knowledge, after all, is merely a perception of relations."

"In that case," says England triumphantly, "I don't see that you have anything to discuss in the way of exceptions."

"Yes, I have," I answer. "That 's what makes the question so interesting. The nearer we approach the gods, the more are we bound to make lower laws give way before higher laws, and the less may we stick to the letter of the law if the letter deny the spirit. The supreme and sole virtue of truth-telling is that it furthers social life and individual development. Should it cease to do that in any particular case, and range itself against the social good, it would become a grave fault in place of a high virtue. For example, no one would hesitate to deceive a pack of wolves and so save his life. Indeed, we should have no respect for a man who, rather than act a lie, allowed himself to be eaten up. The higher duty is to defend the social order. A moral man must tell the absolute truth to every man, woman, and child within the social order, but in those exceptional cases where he has to deal with persons outside the social order, he is under no such necessity. Indeed, it may be more moral to lie."

"Oh, really!" says Ireland, not a little shocked at this view; and England asks, "But then, Mr. Percyfield, *are* there any people outside the social order? I thought you hot young democrats counted all men as brothers."

I like her objection. In time I may even make a democrat out of her. I answer: "That was just the question I put to myself. Is the social order all-inclusive, or are there outsiders?"

"Infidels, Jews, and heretics," suggests England,

and then I see that there is not a trace of democracy in her.

"Not a bit of it," I answer warmly. "That would be most undemocratic. Mere opinion never takes a man out of the social order. He may be right, and you may be wrong. The only thing that can carry him beyond the pale is anti-social action of a destructive sort."

"But who shall judge what constitutes such action?" asks Mademoiselle de Candolle.

"Society must judge, and must run the risk of being wrong. Hence the immense importance of elevated social opinion. For myself, I recognize only three classes of outsiders, — first, an invading army; secondly, crazy and sick people, pretty much the same thing, you know; and thirdly, outlaws. It would seem to me more moral to lie to invaders and crazy people and criminals, if by lying one could deceive them, and so defeat their unsocial purposes."

"Don't you think that 's a dangerous creed, Mr. Percyfield?" asks England.

"Yes, Madame," I answer frankly, "I think it is extremely dangerous. But so is dynamite, so is all power. One must not be a coward morally any more than physically. And I find practically that a willingness to lie under exceptional circumstances makes one more punctilious in the normal affairs of life. The danger, too, is diminished by the fact that one does not ordinarily meet invaders or outlaws, or even people crazy enough to be called so."

"You did not put your theory into practice," laughs the Châtelaine.

"That is true. Force of habit, you know. I had never talked over the social wall before, and I told the strict truth, just as I should have done had we both been on the same side of the wall. It was n't the highest morality, though. It would have been much better if I had saved at least forty dollars and given it to you for the Christmas-tree up at the village."

"I should never have allowed you to give so much," retorts the Châtelaine, who guards my pocket-book much more carefully than I do. "The twenty francs were quite enough. But tell us what you did the next day."

"As nearly as I can remember I woke up." At this we all laugh, and it is quite as well, for we had been getting into rather deep waters for a holiday. "I found myself out in the wilds of Montana with just two silver dollars in my pocket, and an appetite as keen as a hunter's. It was a distinct sensation, not to have any money in your pocket, and I am rather glad to have had it. Later in the day I met a young fellow from Boston, Mr. Richard Forrester, whom I had seen at several of the hotels in the Park. He was in another sleeper, and had managed to save nearly a hundred dollars of his own money, so he kindly cashed a small cheque for me, and I gave the two silver dollars back to Montana. As Forrester was a stranger, I was foolish and would only let him

give me five dollars. I did not realize how very short a distance five dollars will go, especially if you pay seventy-five cents or a dollar for every meal. Consequently, in going from Minneapolis to Chicago, I had not enough money to pay for a berth in the sleeper, and had to sit up all night. Whom should I see in the front part of the car but the nervous woman! Of course, she had to tell her adventures to the people around her, and presently a hearty Westerner stood up and addressed us all, —

"'I say, fellows, this poor girl' — she was at least fifty — 'was in the hold-up we read about yesterday, and lost everything she had. I propose to pass around the hat for her.'

"When he came to me, the humor of the situation seemed too good to keep to myself, so I explained to him why I could give nothing. But I begged him not to say anything about it, for I had no desire to have them associate me in their thoughts with the nervous woman, or to have this kind-hearted Westerner pass around the hat for me. I think my grandfather Percyfield would have turned in his grave."

"And did you never get your money back?" asks Scotland.

"Not a penny of it. I put in a claim against the railroad company, for they had charged me a good round sum for fares, and I considered that they were bound to protect me, but they refused to consider the claim. Indeed, they treated me worse than the robbers did, for they even declined to supply me with

meals and a berth until I could reach Chicago and telegraph home for money. I should have fared ill had it not been for Montana and Mr. Forrester."

"I hope they caught the robbers, did they not?" says England.

"Yes, they caught them not long afterwards in a lonely cabin out in the mountains. There were five of them at that time, and they were evidently preparing to hold up a train on the Great Northern. It was a regular siege. The sheriff and his party numbered thirteen men. One man was sent forward with a white flag of truce. The robbers responded by shooting him dead. When I think of it, I am almost sorry that Montana did not kill the three of them right there in the train, and let come what would. You see, the robbers were quite lost to all sense of honor and decency. It fairly makes me shiver to think that I talked with one of them, and that he handled this wallet of mine. When the surrender finally came, four of the robbers were quite dead, and the other desperately wounded."

"What a dreadful tale!" says Ireland, drawing still nearer to the fire. "It sounds like the middle ages, quite."

So I hasten to add, "I must conclude the tale with something pleasant, another coincidence — a true one, Madame. Afterwards when I went back to Harvard, President Eliot gave his customary reception to the new men and graduate students, and of course I went. I had a number of pleasant encounters. I noticed a

familiar face that I could not at all place. I noticed, too, that its owner regarded me intently from time to time. Presently he came up to me, and holding out his hand, said in a very friendly way, 'Is this not Mr. Percyfield, of Philadelphia?' I took his hand and smiled back, for I have ever had a fondness for handsome, manly young fellows, but I had to confess that I could not recall his name. 'I was once on a train with you in Montana,' he began, but at once I interrupted him, 'And you are Mr. Richard Forrester, and you kindly cashed a cheque for me!' It seems that Mr. Forrester was an assistant at the university, and we often got together that winter and talked over our adventures."

"Well," declares England, "I am prepared to hear that you met the Montana man, your rough diamond, crossing the ocean, and saw the nervous woman in Paris, and so on to the end."

"Not a bit of it," I laughingly answer. "That is really the very end of the story. And I don't tell it any more at home, lest I shall get to be known as 'That man who was held up.'"

"And you're too much of a democrat to care for titles, aren't you?"

"Not at all. I am very proud to be plain Mr. Percyfield, for it is an honest name that has come down unspotted from that first Mr. Percyfield of whom we have any knowledge, the one who was esquire to William the Conqueror, as you will see if you look over the list in Poor's Annals of London. The book was

published in 1600. Perhaps you have n't a copy of it." The Annals happens to be one of the treasures in the library at Uplands, and it is a safe hazard that England never saw it. This bit of family news makes as deep an impression on England as if she had been a Philadelphian. As the gentle Ireland seems still a bit shaken by her glimpse into a rougher world, I go on in the lighter vein. "But I 'm always a trifle shy of any title beginning 'That man.' Once when I was walking in Carolina, I went for the day out to Cæsar's Head. It 's a mountain just over the line, in South Carolina, and there 's a rambling old summer hotel there. I had on my golf trousers — it was before they were at all common in the South. I did n't know the people at the hotel, and quite failed to get up anything of a conversation with the dull old gentleman who sat at the same table with me at dinner, and so I was one of the first to leave. I had got as far as the centre of the big dining-room, when a sweet little girl of four said in the high soprano of her years, 'Oh, mamma, there goes that man with the short pants on.' — Pardon the word, but the child said 'pants.' You can imagine the effect. The room was full and every one naturally looked at my embarrassed self. Quite as naturally every one smiled, some of them audibly. Ever since then I have been sensitive to any remarks beginning with those words."

By this time it is quite the hour for retiring, even if it is the fête of the Escalade. I would only remark in passing that it is always well to tell your frontier

adventures after dark. For one thing the evening dress heightens the effect.

When the ladies withdraw and leave me to my scales and five-finger exercises, they thank me very prettily for my tales, and England puts out her hand and adds graciously, "Indeed, Mr. Percyfield, for all that you have said — I shall think it all over."

The gentle Ireland declares, however, that she will hardly be able to sleep, and begs the Châtelaine to see that the front door is locked.

"Which one, Countess?" asks the Châtelaine, laughing.

You remember that we have six of them.

CHAPTER VI

AN ÉTUDE OF BERTINI'S

In one corner of the big drawing-room of the Château, there stands an old square piano. The ivory keys are yellow with time, and the fashion of the woodwork is no longer to be found in the market. But the tone is still sweet and true. I never went near the ancient instrument when there was any one in the room, but when I found myself there quite alone, I used sometimes to lift the lid furtively, and then, seeing that the doors were shut very tight, I would run over the scales, or produce an uneven patter of arpeggios. This was the extent of my musical accomplishment. I have always taken it hard that I could make no music with either voice or hand, for in point of devotion to sweet sounds I exceed the most ardent. But my grandfather Percyfield, as I have said, would never allow me to be taught music. It is the only part of his educational plan that I have ever seriously questioned. If it be true that this omission was the price of good health, then I think that my grandfather Percyfield was quite right. It is a heavenly thing to have a sound, wholesome body, in which you can find no ache or pain, no organ out of order, nothing but the sensation of vigorous, delightful life.

It 's a bit of good fortune that we all ought to have, and I am always grateful to my grandfather Percyfield that he secured it for me at any cost. But if he could only have given me this and music, too! It is one of the minor tragedies of life not to have the music.

It is a fortunate thing when one's taste runs with one's talent. Here am I, who can do a hundred and one things that I hardly care to do, and I can scarcely sing or play a note. But I must be patient. I have arranged with Fate that in my next incarnation, I am to sing and to play the violin. But the ivory keys of that old piano have a fascination about them. They suggested the thought that I might perhaps get in some of my drill work here and now.

I set about finding a teacher, rather shyly and shamefacedly, I confess, for it did seem a trifle absurd for a man nearly thirty to be taking up the elements of music. I spoke to the Châtelaine about it, and with characteristic energy she began the search. She thought that possibly our neighbor at Mon Bijou would teach me — Mademoiselle Werner.

The very next afternoon, when the Châtelaine and I were out walking, we had the good fortune to meet Mademoiselle Werner. She is a beautiful woman, I should say about forty-five, but I was never good at guessing age, for it interests me to know, not how long people have been at it, but rather what they have succeeded in accomplishing. Mademoiselle Werner's hair is touched with gray, but her face is as fair and fresh

as a child's. Her dress that afternoon was curiously youthful, being fairly gay with color, and yet it did not strike one as being unsuitable. It was only that she was in every way an unusual looking person. The Châtelaine was walking ahead of me at the time, as it happened to be a little muddy. There were some sedate, stupid-looking cows coming towards us. Mademoiselle Werner rushed over to the Châtelaine in a great state of alarm, fearful lest her red cloak should bring trouble. She clung to the Châtelaine as any small child might have done. In spite of her genuine terror, it was funny to see this great big woman in her flowing cloak and draperies clinging to so small a protector as Mademoiselle de Candolle. When I came up, Mademoiselle Werner appealed to me without thought of an introduction, only it was in excellent English, with what seemed to me a very pretty accent: —

"Oh, I am so afraid of those cows! Do you think they will hurt me? I must not any more wear this red cloak when I go to walk."

Swiss cows are not excitable, and they took no more notice of us than if we had been so many sparrows. But even after the cows had passed, and quite disappeared around a curve in the road, it took some time to calm this very impetuous person. "It must be that I am very nervous to-day," she said, by way of apology.

When the Châtelaine mentioned the music, the cows were instantly forgotten, and Mademoiselle Wer-

ner threw herself into the subject with the same vehemence that she had shown before. "Oh, yes, I play! play very much, — Chopin, Beethoven, Wagner, Grieg; but how do you know that I could teach Mr. Percyfield to play? I have never given lessons, moi, what made you think that I could do it? Did it seem to you that I am a very methodical person?" She laughed as heartily as a boy might if you proposed that he should do something quite ridiculous. Then she turned to me, and laid her hand on my arm. "I am a creature of impulse, Monsieur, and it is droll to me to think of teaching any one else to play."

I was too much occupied in watching Mademoiselle Werner to say much myself. I had never seen any one who seemed so thoroughly a child, or to live so absolutely in the present moment. Yet she was perfectly unaffected, and did not offend one's sense of suitableness. I was struck, too, with the composers she had mentioned, for they seemed so entirely appropriate to her curious, impulsive nature. I could not picture her as playing Mozart or Haydn. She regarded me attentively. Her large gray-blue eyes had almost clairvoyant power. Then she said, "Well, if you want it, Mr. Percyfield, I will give you a lesson. After that we will see. Come to-morrow afternoon, but not until five. I must paint while the light is good. One can play when the lamp is lighted."

I had begun to share Mademoiselle Werner's doubts about her ability to teach me music, but I looked forward with interest to the lesson. At five o'clock the

next afternoon I stood before her door. It was a little country house, quite perfect of its kind, and deserved its name of "Mon Bijou." It was back a mile or so from the lake on the ridge beyond St. Maurice. The house was surrounded by a grove of beautiful, large oak trees, and on the edge of the wood was a little walled terrasse that gave a splendid view of the Voirons and Mont Blanc. When I arrived, Mademoiselle Werner had a visitor, and so bade me sit down on the terrasse and enjoy the view. Presently an old woman joined me. She looked curiously like Mademoiselle Werner, except that she was coarser and quite lacked Mademoiselle's charming spirituality. She spoke with the same directness, but in her it seemed like unpardonable bluntness. In fact she gave me rather an uncanny feeling.

It was fully a quarter of an hour before Mademoiselle Werner dismissed her visitor and joined us on the terrasse. She talked with great animation about the fine weather and the beauty of the view, addressing her conversation quite as much to the bearded old woman as to me, a touch of courtesy that greatly pleased me. I found out that the old woman was a cousin, Madame Grison, and that the two lived together at Mon Bijou. Finally, we all went into the drawing-room and the lesson began.

There was no music in sight. We sat down to the piano together, while Madame Grison established herself at the window. Mademoiselle Werner had singularly small hands for so large a woman, and she let

them race up and down the keyboard with marvelous skill. She was evidently an accomplished musician. Once in a while she had me play a scale, appealing to the old woman for the relation between the different scales, and sometimes even for their composition. Occasionally I was able to answer these questions myself, and this greatly amused Mademoiselle Werner, and she told me that it was I who ought to be the teacher. But we did no one thing for more than two minutes at a time. Once I believe I ran the scale of G major over three octaves and back again, but that was the longest excursion I was allowed to make. The old woman interrupted, the maid came to the door to ask about some household matters, or was called and bidden to look up some music in the cellar. Mademoiselle Werner dashed off a roulade. Then she would talk, perhaps ten minutes at a time, and not a note would be struck.

"I ought not to teach you music," she said; "I cannot do it; I do not know it myself; I never learned. Yes, I play; it is true. But do you know how I do it? It is by instinct. It is all in my heart and not in my head. I am a genuine child of fantasy. With me it is all impulse, not at all the reflection. Yes, I improvise. I never know what it will be like. I do not see the notes; I only feel," — she pushed me aside unconsciously, and played for several minutes. It was entrancing music, full of delicate sentiment, but with an undercurrent of tragedy that fairly frightened me. She broke off as abruptly as she had begun, and

went on speaking. "I have not always played. It has only been within the last few years. I am not a musician, I am an artist. But once I had to speak in music. It was after my dear mother died, and my heart was breaking. I went to an old friend, a musician. I told him he must teach me to play. He understood. He had loved my dear mother when she was a girl. He put me to sleep — what do you call it? — yes, hypnotism, that is it. He hypnotized me. That was the way I learned to play. Is it not so, ma cousine?" The old woman grunted. "So you see, I do not know how to play; I only play;" and Mademoiselle Werner laughed as delightfully as a child would, in telling you of some prank.

I really wanted to play a few notes and began running one of the scales, when Mademoiselle Werner happened to glance out of the window and notice that the sunset was very beautiful. She sprang to her feet and cried impetuously, "Come, it is much too beautiful to remain indoors. Let us go out on the terrasse for a time. Come, ma cousine; come, Mr. Percyfield!"

The old woman declined to leave the house, but sat at the window where she could see the sunset and the terrasse. She was, however, out of hearing. Mademoiselle Werner and I hurried out to the terrasse and sat down on a bench facing the mountains. The sunset was magnificent. It was quite comparable to the entrancing music that Mademoiselle Werner had just been playing. The valley below us and the lower

hills were passing into the shadow, and the great earth circle that separates night and day was creeping up toward the eternal snow on the bosom of Mont Blanc. The sky itself was on fire with orange and gold against a background of luminous yellow, and that fascinating green which one sees only in the sky. To the east there were heavy clouds of purple touched with the yellow and rose glint of the sunset. There was something almost terrifying in the beauty, like the undercurrent in Mademoiselle Werner's music. It seemed daring even to be looking at it. I glanced at Mademoiselle Werner. The sunset glow was reflected in her face. I think I have never seen any one look so beautiful. This child of nature, this great, simple soul, living as she did absolutely in the present moment, was living now the splendid drama of the sunset. Her face was radiant, transfigured. It was as if she saw the open gate of heaven.

I think that Mademoiselle Werner entirely forgot my presence. I was not sorry, for it was not a time for speech. We have mighty words in the language, but they are hopelessly inadequate in the face of Nature. One must be content to feel the beauty and to leave unuttered the things that are inexpressible.

Presently a noise startled Mademoiselle Werner. It was only the gardener. He was raking the little pebbles on the path. "Alfred," she cried, "is it not entrancing?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle, it is magnificent," a deep bass voice called back. There was considerable feel-

ing in it, though I doubt not that he was often called from his meditations into the glory of the present moment and was perhaps a bit used to it.

"I always speak so to my people," said Mademoiselle Werner, partly in explanation and partly apologetically. "They ought not to live with us and not grow better. Do you think they ought, Mr. Percyfield? It is terrible to be just a body and not to have a soul. Or to have a soul and to have it asleep;" — then, raising her voice, "ma cousine, is it not heavenly? Call Ida and Sophie and tell them to go now into the garden. It is wicked to be in the kitchen."

The old woman only grunted, for Madame Grison was not much given to conversation, so Mademoiselle Werner herself did the calling — "Ida, Sophie, come quickly! It will be too late."

Then I saw two stolid peasant girls come out of the house, and walk towards the edge of the woods. They stood there patiently with their faces turned towards the sky. I could not help wondering what they saw. Certainly not what Mademoiselle Werner saw. She herself sat there like a worshiper, with her hands tightly clasped. She continued to look across the valley, but the light was fading now, and she went on talking. "It is a dreadful thing to be shut out from all this. How can they be so cruel as to shut any one up for life, — *for life*, — think of it, Mr. Percyfield! That was what they did to the peasant who killed the Empress of Austria. It was shocking, brutal, to kill a harmless woman that way. But, Monsieur, it was

the evil of a moment. They could have hung him, or they could have tried to soften and redeem him. But this — it is too dreadful. He is shut up for life, and each day his soul grows darker and more embittered." Mademoiselle Werner covered her face with her hands. As she had lived the ecstasy of the sunset, so she lived the tragedy of the condemned. In a moment, she dashed her hands down and turned to me appealingly, "You are a man, Mr. Percyfield. Make them stop doing these dreadful things. Do not let them shut any one up for life, no matter what evil he has put into one wild moment. It is because I have had trouble, moi, that I feel so deeply for those who sorrow. Has Mademoiselle de Candolle told you anything of my life? No? There has been a cloud hanging over me — even sometimes, I think, Monsieur, over my mind. No, I am not mad. But it was this way. Six years ago I lost my dear mother. It was as if my own life went out. My body was here, but my spirit was in the grave. Have you, too, suffered? Ah, then, you will understand. And there were other troubles. I painted, oh, yes, I painted. It was all I could do. It was that thing that kept me from going mad. But I could not sell my pictures. They were too tragic. An artist, Monsieur, puts his soul into his pictures. It is what you must put into your books, your very soul. They were well painted, those pictures. Yes, I know they were well painted. But no one would buy them. The people looked at them and wept, for there was no hope in those pictures. I was

worried as well as sad. We had our house in Geneva, ma cousine and I, and then we had this little house in the woods, and we were paying rent for both of these places. Ma cousine's fortune is not large, and I, I have only my hands. What could I do, Monsieur? Then suddenly everything changed. The proprietor who owned this little house was a drunken fellow. He could not keep it. It was taken for debt. The new proprietor sold it to ma cousine very favorably. We gave up the house in Geneva. Now we have no rent at all to pay. We seem suddenly to be rich, for ma cousine's little fortune is enough. And now, Monsieur, the people buy my pictures. Yes, I have put hope into them. It is not only that we have ceased to worry about the money. But something else happened. It was strange, but it is true, Monsieur, and I should like to tell it to you. I have no one to talk to. Ma cousine is a kind woman. She has given me this house for my own; she treats me as a daughter. You must respect that old woman even if you cannot admire her. But she is coarse. She cannot help it. She has the spleen. She loves me, but she does not understand me. I am all, what do you call it — geist? Yes, that is it, I am all geist. I should be quite alone, were it not for that strange thing that happened to me. It was only last spring, Monsieur, that the cloud lifted and the hope came back. This was the way it happened. I had been in Paris to see the pictures. I did not want to go. Ma cousine insisted. It did not do me any good. I knew how to paint. It

was the soul that was heavy. Ma cousine met me in Geneva. We came on the steamboat out to Hermance. We drove up to this little house. I had been much agitated. But the earth was very beautiful — Mon Dieu, how beautiful it was! The trees were a tender green. The flowers were springing up on all sides. The air was so fresh and very sweet. A strange peace came into my heart. I thought perhaps that I was dying and that I was going to my dear mother. When we reached the house, I begged ma cousine to remain below, and not to send either Ida or Sophie to me. I went upstairs to my dear mother's room. We had always kept it just as it was when she died. I knelt down at her bed. I do not know how long I remained there. My dear mother came and stood beside me. I felt her presence. Then she, too, knelt, and put her arms around me. No, I did not see her. But I knew how she looked without opening my eyes. I saw her, Monsieur, with the spirit. No, she did not speak to me. It was not necessary. I felt her love in my heart. That strange peace took complete possession of me. And, Monsieur, it has never left me. It was my resurrection."

Mademoiselle Werner had risen, and in her radiant beauty she looked, indeed, like one who had passed through the tomb, and had left there all that was earthly and unspiritual. By this time the sunlight had faded from even the highest summits of the Alps and the air was growing chilly.

"Come," said Mademoiselle Werner. "Let us go

into the house and continue the lesson." She took my hand and led me, as she would have done a child. And indeed, I felt myself a boy in the presence of a spirit, older and more severely tried.

The old woman was still in the drawing-room. She had lighted a lamp and placed it near the piano. Ida, too, had been successful, and had found the piece of music that Mademoiselle Werner wanted. It was an étude of Bertini's. I went through it very clumsily indeed, first one hand, then the other, then both, with long pauses when the notes wandered into the leger lines, and with variations in the tempo that must have included all possible fractions. Afterwards Mademoiselle Werner played it, and limited as the composition was, it now sounded like rippling music, and I found it hard to realize that it was the same piece. It was past seven when I rose to go. Mademoiselle Werner held out her hand. "I cannot teach you, Mr. Percyfield," she said, "because I do not know myself. But when you have learned to read, come, and we will play the four-hand pieces together. I want you to keep this étude. I will give you the address of a much better teacher. She was to have been ma belle-sœur, but my fiancé died." She wrote the address in my notebook very quickly. She had marvelous hands.

Then I bowed to Madame Grison, took Mademoiselle Werner's hand for a moment and passed out into the darkness. It was still August, but already there was the odor of decayed leaves in the air. As I walked back to the Château, I had a strange, un-

earthly feeling, as if I were in a dream world. The white limestone road stretched through the gloom, like a ghostly thread in the void of space. The fields and woodlands were confused shadows. I was glad to find myself at the Château again, and to join the Châtelaine and the United Kingdom at our delayed dinner.

I could not easily forget that first afternoon with Mademoiselle Werner. What impressed me most at the time was her improvising, though later, I think it was the story of the cloud that hung over her spirit, and of her resurrection into the gladness of life. It has always seemed to me that to improvise is about the most wonderful thing that a man can do. I think if I could improvise, I should die happy. I have a friend who does it. But like other obstinate people, he declines to be a musician. He is merely a "history-man," as Charlotte calls him. He comes to see me on the average just about once a year, but his visit is always a long one. He comes very early, usually at half past seven, rings the bell hesitatingly, and says that he has run in for half an hour's talk. This does not at all deceive me, for I know perfectly well that he will linger until after midnight.

I have an infallible way of disposing of guests who stay too long. When I think it is quite time for them to go home, I withdraw my interest. The effect is marvelous, for it makes the room seem suddenly quite empty. I had once a young fellow calling on me who was not at all expert in the art of leaving. He

stayed and he stayed and he stayed. It was approaching midnight. Charlotte tells me satirically that I make myself too interesting. On this occasion I was growing decidedly sleepy. Suddenly I resolved to withdraw my interest. The young fellow sprang up and said hurriedly, "Well, Percyfield, it 's quite time I was going." For the moment I was afraid that I had spoken aloud, but his cordial handshake and the fact that he came soon again entirely reassured me.

This method of speeding the parting guest may not seem entirely hospitable, but really I never use it except under pretty strong provocation. I am something of a night-owl myself, and should rather talk, or even be talked to — by the right people — than sleep. For example, there is my college chum, the naturalist. When he gets to talking about the birds, and gives their calls and tells how he watches them in the forest, I could listen all night, and sometimes I come pretty near to doing so. One night, I remember, he stayed until half past one o'clock. The next time I saw him, he called out to me, "I must keep better hours, Percyfield. Mother was sitting up for me the other night."

"What did she say?" I asked.

"She looked at me, then she looked at the clock, and then she said, '*Poor* Mr. Percyfield.'"

I never dismiss the history-man. He is one of the most interesting talkers I know. I never read his books, for I don't go in much for history, but I dare say I get the better and more human side of him dur-

ing his visits. There is time for several things to happen in the course of a five-hour call, and usually among other things he plays for me. It makes a pleasant break. He used sometimes to play Meyerbeer, but he did it harshly, and I took little pleasure in that part of the programme. But afterwards he would play very gently and very softly, sweet, low chords that showed me he had a warm, human side to him, if only he would let it out. Then he would turn around shyly and say, "You never heard that before, did you?" and I would shake my head, knowing full well what was coming. "Well," he would go on, "I never played it before. It kept running through my head this morning before I got up."

On one of these annual visits, or "visitations," as Charlotte humorously called them, the history-man found us still at dinner. He is a bashful man, and I had difficulty in persuading him to join us for a plate of cream and a cup of black coffee. He need not have been afraid. There was only Charlotte, my aunt Percyfield, our friend of many talents, — the one we call Miss Polyhymnia, — and myself. We put the history-man next to Miss Polyhymnia, and he was soon more at ease, for she had read all his books and fortunately admired them. Presently we went into the drawing-room, and the hours began to roll around. The old French clock on the mantelpiece is in good order, but we never wind it up, for Miss Polyhymnia says it is not polite to be forever telling your guests what o'clock it is. As she usually stops overnight with Charlotte,

she can speak disinterestedly. But I could hear the dining-room clock ticking away. It struck eight, then nine, then ten. My aunt Percyfield is an old-fashioned gentlewoman and believes in retiring early. She keeps the same hours in town that she does out at Uplands. Shortly after ten, she excused herself and went up to bed. Her room was the second story front, directly over the drawing-room. Presently we heard the unmistakable thud of two shoes on the floor above. My aunt Percyfield must have dropped them from the height of the bed, at least, for otherwise they could never have made so much noise. I knew her too well to think that it was accidental.

"Do you hear that?" said the history-man.

"Yes," said Charlotte, with perfect composure, "but I hoped that you did n't."

It was then that I asked the history-man if he kept up his old habit of improvising. For answer, he went to the piano and began to play; not so well, I thought, as when we were alone, but still very sweetly. When he stopped, and we had all praised the music, I began inquiring how he did it, for just then I was studying psychology, and was much interested in the question of method.

The history-man looked thoughtful. "I don't know exactly how I do it," he said, finally. "I seem to hear a voice, and I follow it the best I can. You 've noticed in a chorus that sometimes one voice rings out clear and high above all the rest. I do not see the keys, but I hear that leading voice and try to catch

it in the air. The accompaniment represents the other voices."

We were all deeply interested, and Miss Polyhymnia wanted to know if he could improvise, if some one else suggested a line of thought. The history-man offered to try, and at his bidding, Charlotte read a poem. Of all difficult, impossible things in the world, she selected my dear Matthew Arnold's "Self-dependence," the poem beginning, "Weary of myself, and sick of asking what I am, and what I ought to be." I was about to cry out that the task was unfair, but our improvisatore went again to the piano, and turned the poem into a fine bit of subjective music. Charlotte and Miss Polyhymnia were less impressed than I was, for I don't think they realized how difficult the task was. My own praise, however, was warm enough to cover any deficiencies on their part — or, at least, I hope it was.

Miss Polyhymnia knows her Matthew Arnold by heart, and so I asked her if she would not repeat some lines with a little more of the outer world in them. She looked into the fire a moment, and then throwing back her head, repeated in a voice that was itself music, the last part of Sohrab and Rustum. The father, you remember, sits with his dead son on the sands by the river, and then comes that sudden break from human anguish to the calm of Nature, — "But the majestic river floated on, out of the mist and hum of that low land, into the frosty starlight." I was proud of the history-man and was almost minded to

read his books. He gave us the picture in his music, quite perfectly, — the anguish of the father who had unwittingly slain his own son; the pathos of the solitary old man sitting there on the sands with his dead; then the calm onflowing of the Oxus, and finally the low breakers and dull boom of the Polar Sea. It reminded me of Rubinstein's Kamennoi-Ostrow, where the surge of the Baltic forms the background for the old Gregorian chant of the monks.

In spite of my aunt Percyfield's dreadful hint, the history-man remained until after midnight, and even then Charlotte and Miss Polyhymnia and I sat over the fire a full half hour longer, talking about many things. Miss Polyhymnia is a person with a great passion for symbolizing. Besides giving people rather fanciful names, she has a fashion of describing them in terms of color. Charlotte is royal-blue, I am lavender, and my aunt Percyfield is burnt-siena. Miss Polyhymnia usually sends me a New Year's card, and she is apt to write on it, "May the philosopher and man of sentiment realize lavender." She had some difficulty in disposing of the history-man, and it was that that kept us up so late. Finally she decided that he was a complex character, and assigned him pinkish brown, the color of Lisbon marble. Then we were able to go to bed.

I wonder what name and color Miss Polyhymnia would give to Margaret.

Mademoiselle Werner's belle-sœur that was to have been preferred to come to the Château to give the

lessons. Her name was Martigny. She was so different from Mademoiselle Werner that often I looked at her and wondered what kind of a man the dead brother could have been, the one that Mademoiselle Werner was to have married. Madame Martigny was tall and angular, always dressed in black, and had a chronic stoop. She was entirely unimaginative, but her long, bony fingers were as supple almost as Mademoiselle Werner's, and she proved to be an excellent teacher. I doubt if she ever improvised a dozen notes, but she knew music thoroughly, — that is, the objective part of it. My own slender knowledge of tetrachords, scales, major and minor, dominant fifths and diminished sevenths, was as nothing before this encyclopædia. Madame Martigny made me work, too, which was perhaps her greatest service. And when I stumbled and balked, she took it so much to heart that I resolutely tried to do better. I learned the Etude of Bertini's and indeed a whole book of them. It was not inspiring gymnastics, and the further I progressed the more I realized how impossible it would have been for Mademoiselle Werner to have gone through all this drudgery with me. But I was, myself, quite willing to pay the price, for it meant the open door into a modest corner of paradise.

Sometimes I would work for weeks without making any very appreciable progress. But gradually I found my fingers growing less and less stubborn, and the musical score more and more of an open book. My great reward, however, came very suddenly. I had

been working hard for fully six months, three lessons a week, and an hour of daily practice, — or perhaps I ought to say nightly practice, for the hour was usually from eleven until midnight. It was my last lesson, for I was going into Italy for two or three months the very next day. Madame Martigny appeared with a little roll in her hand. We always went over the scales, major and minor, every lesson, and then we had a soul-trying exercise for the greater liberty of the obstinate ring-finger. We did all this as usual, and then Madame Martigny produced her little roll and untied it. It was a prelude of Chopin's, and she put it on the music rack before me. I glanced at it, and to my own vast amazement, proceeded to play it.

Great God, what a thrill went over me!

It was a simple prelude, slow and easy chords, but had it been the Twelfth Nocturne itself or one of the Ballades, I could not have been more moved. To have loved music passionately and to have believed the door closed, and then suddenly to find it open — it was like a revelation. I shall never be able to play for people. As Madame Martigny humorously remarked, I am too old to blossom out as a boy pianist. But to play these sweet and simple things for myself will keep up my courage for that next incarnation when I am to sing and to play the violin.

Madame Martigny's pleasure was touching. It was a satisfaction to her, of course, to have been so successful a teacher, but she is an unselfish soul, as I sup-

pose every good teacher must be, and I know that her deepest pleasure was in my own very evident delight.

I had been many times to see Mademoiselle Werner, and had come to have a genuine affection for her. I found her always the same, living absolutely in the present moment, and in spite of her excitability, radiant with her new-found peace. She spoke to me of many things, gravely and reverently, but with all the frankness and directness of a child. In everything she said there was that same intenseness, that same vitality, that had made such an impression on me at the time of our first talk on the terrasse. She often played for me, but she had never asked me how my own music came on. I rather marveled at it. After that last lesson with Madame Martigny, I went up to Mon Bijou to bid Mademoiselle Werner good-by. Then for the first time she asked me about my music. I told her the story of the prelude. She listened with rapt attention. When she broke the silence she spoke very slowly, looking directly into my face all the time.

"You have had a lesson," she said, "every Monday and Wednesday and Friday at four o'clock in the afternoon, and at night you have practiced from eleven to twelve."

"Yes; but I never told you, Mademoiselle Werner. How did you know it?"

"Know it?" she laughed softly. "It was I, Monsieur, who arranged it all."

I was completely mystified. "I do not understand," I said stupidly.

"My friend," said Mademoiselle Werner, more gravely, "do you not know that you live very near the boundary between the visible world and the unseen? Do you not feel it? Are you blind? This quest of yours, that you call in your droll way the search for the indeterminate good, began when you were a very little boy. It has been at the bottom of everything that you have done. It is this that has driven you from one pursuit to another, that will go on driving you. Do you know what it is, this search of yours? You do not know? I will tell you. In reality, it is the search for God." Mademoiselle Werner had risen, as she always did when she was deeply moved, and stood directly in front of me. She had the simple, primitive dignity that I fancy might have attached to a prophetess of Israel. Her large eyes had in them even more than their usual earnest clairvoyance. She continued speaking: "You will succeed. I know that you will succeed. You are good and true, — it is all that is required. You have begun to live the life. Already you have consciously started on the Path. It commences here and ends in infinity, with the Perfect One. The greater part of your knowledge, do you know where it comes from? It comes to you by instinct. Is it not so? Yes, I know that I am right. Being this sort of a man, Mr. Percyfield, it is possible for those who are strong in the spirit to speak to you in other ways than by word of mouth. I arranged with Madame Martigny about the hours for the lessons. But the hours for the prac-

ticing I arranged with you directly." She paused and regarded me attentively.

"I think I understand, Mademoiselle Werner. It was a case of suggestion."

"Yes, my friend. I could do it with safety. I knew that the late hour would not hurt you."

"But, dear Mademoiselle Werner, why did you do all this? Why did you want me to practice at night?"

"Ah, my friend, I did not mean to tell you that. But I know that you will not be offended. I am disengaged at those hours. These wintry days I must stop my painting at four o'clock. I retire a little before eleven, but I do not sleep until it is midnight."

"And do you mean to say," I cried incredulously, "that you have given me your conscious thought *every* lesson, *every* hour of my practice?"

"Yes," said Mademoiselle Werner, simply, "I have helped you with my thought."

I could not speak. I who have had great kindness from all the world, had never yet had kindness such as this. Ten hours a week for six months, Mademoiselle Werner, all unasked, had been working for me in her spirit. It mattered not whether the work had been effective or not, for these things are still beyond my comprehension, but the gentle, human service had been the same. I was quite overcome and could not break the silence.

Mademoiselle Werner spoke to me gently. "My friend, you are not offended?"

"No, Mademoiselle Werner, I am not offended. How *could* I be offended? But I am too deeply touched for words. No one has ever shown me such goodness, such devotion."

"It is nothing," she answered, lightly. "You have given me a better service, your comradeship and your sympathy. This — it is a little thing. But it was all that I could do."

I took Mademoiselle Werner's hand, and pressed it for a moment to my lips. It was not after the gallant manner of the French that I did it, but after the heartfelt manner of a simple Pennsylvanian.

The following day I went into Italy.

CHAPTER VII

CROSS ROADS

THERE are two hotels at Pompeii, the Pension Suisse and the Hôtel Diomède. I stayed at the Pension Suisse, which was a piece of great good luck.

I went down from Naples on the evening train. It must have been after eight when I reached Pompeii. There were no other passengers getting off there, and I was poor prey, for I carried only my suit case and an umbrella. There were at least fifteen hungry porters waiting for me. I felt sorry for them, but no amount of pity could divide my suit case into two portions without seriously damaging it. As it was, one able-bodied man carried my umbrella, and another took possession of my case. A third tried to help me, but was denied the privilege. Considering that I carry both case and umbrella myself without the least inconvenience, I felt that two men were almost sufficient. The other men would have much enjoyed carrying my hat, my coat, and one glove apiece, but as I preferred to wear these, my two men and I proceeded to the Pension Suisse, while the other porters, reduced to the unlucky number of thirteen, followed us grumbling. When I got to the Pension Suisse, — it is only a step from the station, — the proprietor said it

was very regrettable, but he had not a single chamber vacant, and he knew the Hôtel Diomède was equally crowded; if, however, Monsieur would be contented to go to the dépendance, he would find it entirely comfortable and everything could be happily arranged. It seemed to be Hobson's choice, and Monsieur took it. Although the dépendance was stated to be very near, it was thought wiser to drive there. After a due amount of waiting, the proprietor's son appeared with the wildest, most top-heavy little vehicle that I have ever intrusted my person to. It was a sort of open chaise, perched aloft on top of four little wheels that looked like wooden spools. The pony was small, but wicked. When we were packed in, and two other porters had disposed of my suit case and umbrella, the junior proprietor cracked his whip and off we started. He drove more recklessly than Jehu, and literally I had to hold on. This speed was intended, I presume, to diminish the seeming distance between the pension and the dépendance, but it was a good half mile at any speed.

Fortunately the moon was shining, and the ride not without interest. To the left of the white road were the glistening walls and buildings of ancient Pompeii, looking like the ghost of a city. To the right of the road were equally white fields, with here and there the black shadow of a thick-clustering orange tree. I had been living a busy life in Rome for some weeks past, and this sudden transfer from the imperial city to deserted, moon-struck Pompeii, was like pass-

ing into a dream. The dépendance heightened the unreality. It stood white and silent in the midst of the dark foliage of an orange orchard, looking as ghostly and deserted as the ruins on the other side of the road. I asked the junior proprietor if it were a part of the ruins, and this he considered such a good joke that he kept repeating it, — "A part of ze runes, yez, yez, a part of ze runes," — laughing the while and showing his white teeth. I was glad he laughed, for though I am neither nervous nor a coward, the desolation of my prospective abode smote me with something almost akin to a panic. The cheery laugh of the junior proprietor was the only warm-blooded human element in the whole uncanny scene.

The ground floor of the dépendance was occupied by a sturdy contadino, looking for all the world like a well-fed brigand, and by his old mother, of a kindly face, but a bit cunning. They both came out at the sound of our approach, the old woman carrying an antique lantern. It seemed that the wicked pony needed no hitching. He only cared to run away when there was some one in the chaise to enjoy the fun. So the four of us mounted an outside stairway that led to an open stone platform running the length of the house, and certainly fifteen feet broad. From this platform the world looked even more unreal than before. Back of me rose the walls of this curious house, white and silent as a tomb. In front of me extended the billowy tops of the orange trees, throwing back the moonlight here and there where it happened to

catch the glossy leaves at just the right angle, but showing underneath nothing but a sea of mysterious, lurking blackness. We passed through a double door directly into the room which the contadino said I should have to occupy, as it was the only one ready. The room went with all the rest. It was really not a room, but a long hall. We had entered at one end. At the other end was another double door, leading into mysterious regions beyond. On each side were likewise double doors. There was not a single window. And further, as if there were not doors enough, I found a trap door in the centre of the floor. It would be too bad to have such a unique apartment fail of completeness. I really hoped to find a similar door in the ceiling, but I could not detect one in the uncertain light. However, I shall always please myself by believing that there was one there.

I do not know whether I looked very lonely, or whether it was simply on general principles, but when the junior proprietor drove away, he tried to cheer me up by telling me that the contadino and his old mother were really very good people, and that an American lady was occupying one of the larger apartments on the same floor. The first part of his remark I had to take on faith, but the latter part I threw out altogether as a bit of pure fiction. I felt sure that no American lady would spend a single night alone in such a forlorn old place.

Then they all left me, and without even a decent lamp or candle to keep me company, nothing but a

veritable tallow dip in an ancient, saucer-like receptacle. I might have been an old Roman gentleman going to his retirement, save that I had probably to occupy myself with too much clothing, and had the even greater inconvenience of a memory of modern improvements.

Before going to bed, I took my tallow dip and made a tour of inspection. The double doors at the other end of the room were fastened, but on the other side, so that the fact added nothing to my sense of security. The same was true of the double doors on the left. The double doors leading to the stone platform could be fastened inside, but as there was no window, and I am a great stickler for fresh air, I debated for some time as to whether I had not better leave them open and trust to good luck. I had unfortunately nearly a thousand francs about me, and I had no mind to lose that amount. Finally I decided to lock the doors. There was a crack under them as broad as one of my aunt Percyfield's hints, so after all, I got some air. When I tried the fourth pair of double doors, those on the right wall, they yielded without the least resistance, and opened part way into the darkness. I heard a voice say, "Excuse me." It was distinct and well-bred, apparently a woman's. It flashed over me what the junior proprietor had said about the American lady. I apologized profusely, explaining that it was such a queer old place that I felt I ought to lock my doors. The voice begged me not to be distressed, and said that it was all right. Do what I could, however, it

was impossible to fasten that crazy old door, even indeed to make it stay decently shut, so finally I gave it up, and undressed in the dark.

It seemed to me such a capital place for wakening and finding your throat cut, that I tried to sleep with one eye open, but I was never very good at that sort of thing, and was soon fast asleep. It must have been considerably past midnight when I awoke with a start to find a bright light shining directly into my eyes. I thought the time had come for something to happen. I sat bolt upright in bed. My grandfather Percyfield used always to laugh at Charlotte and me for what he called our rare prudence in the presence of danger. If Charlotte hears a noise at home, she flings open her door, and marches straight downstairs, candle in hand, to see what the matter is. And I have the same instinct of investigation, feeling always that it is better to know with what you have to deal. For the moment I was too dazzled by the light to have any very clear idea as to what was going on. When I found my wits, I saw that the light was in the next apartment, and was shining into my eyes through the crack in those crazy doors. It was the apartment in which I had heard the voice.

Thoroughly alarmed, I rushed over to the doors. "Madame," I cried, "is there anything wrong? Do you need help?"

The same voice came back to me, distinct and quite as serene as the evening before. "No, I thank you. Nothing is wrong. I could not sleep, so I am reading."

Again I apologized and went back to bed. I was somewhat ashamed of my impetuousness, but the place was so dismal and I had heard such tales of Italy that it did not occur to me that the light came from anything so entirely peaceable as a midnight student. Pretty soon I heard a chair being moved against the obstinate door, and then the light ceased to shine in my eyes.

I settled myself once more, and was just falling asleep, when something soft brushed across my face. Again I sat bolt upright. Some small object fell to the floor and scampered across the room. It was evidently a mouse. By this time I began to have the feeling that I was living in a comic opera, or some other sort of a burlesque, and the feeling not being at all agreeable, I went at once to sleep, and did not waken until the proper season. I noticed that the doors on the right wall were still successfully barricaded. I partly opened the doors leading out on the platform so as to have a little more light and air. Then I had a splendid cold bath, and by the time I was dressed, I felt quite on the top of the wave.

I went out into the warm sunshine. At the Château it was still winter, but here in Italy the spring had come. It was a heavenly morning. The sky was blue and cloudless, and the earth seemed literally to be smiling. In the strong sunshine, the orange trees showed their rich green color, lightened here and there by the perfect golden fruit. The contadino and his mother were in the courtyard. They told me in rough

Neapolitan dialect to go into the orchard and help myself to the oranges. I should hardly have understood them, had the words not been helped out with gestures so perfect that they seemed to make all words unnecessary. I had no knife and spoon and dainty Dresden plate, such as would have been forthcoming at Uplands, but nevertheless it was an ideal way of having the first course to one's breakfast, to pluck the great golden fruit from the trees themselves, and to eat it on the spot in however primitive a fashion. When I came out of the orchard, the contadino asked me how many oranges I had taken and intimated that they were two soldi apiece. It was perfectly just and proper, but it dashed the poetry a bit.

Considering that Italy is a land of fruit, one cannot help being struck with the fact that fruit is very jealously guarded. The walls around the gardens are too high to be ornamental, and the pieces of nasty broken glass in the top of them tell a story. One feels, indeed, in this lovely land of art and sunshine, with its walled gardens and barred windows and much bolted doors, that life has too much of the safe-deposit-company about it to be entirely agreeable. It is a sad contrast after the perfect security of Switzerland. I sometimes wonder whether there be any fruit in Italy that people feel at liberty to take without calling it stealing. It is certainly not oranges. With us in America, the apple undoubtedly has this immunity. The most respectable people — people who would not touch a pin without your permission — seem to feel

free to take another man's apples, even when he is not looking. I think they must reason that when Eve stole the first apple, the race paid so heavily for it then and there that the penalty was quite exhausted, and the race is at liberty to go on stealing apples to the end of the story.

By the time I had disposed of my oranges and paid for them, the junior proprietor and his wicked little pony had come to fetch me to breakfast. We took the suit case and umbrella along, as there would be a room for me at the pension when I came back from Vesuvius. I was not sorry to give up the dépendance.

The breakfast-room was quite full when I entered it, and others kept coming and going while I drank my coffee, but I saw no one who seemed to answer to my picture of the American lady.

After breakfast we started at once for Vesuvius. There were four other persons intending to make the ascent on horseback, a German officer and three American girls, two of whom had never ridden before. The German, being a Prussian, took the best horse. The four remaining brutes were what we call in the South "sorry" animals. I suggested that the best, or the least bad rather, should be given to the novices, and that my compatriot in the saddle and I would take what was left. She was a plucky girl, as most horsewomen are, and took up with the plan very willingly. They were all mounted except myself. I took the reins in my left hand, and put one foot into the

stirrup, when my horse threw his hind legs into the air with a freedom and abandon that would have done credit to a Texas broncho. I do not know whether this was from pure exuberance of spirits, a playful desire to have his little fling in the world, or from less praiseworthy motives. At any rate, I backed off and asked the senior proprietor if he had another horse.

"Ah, if Monsieur will only get on the beast!" he cried, "he will find him an excellent animal."

"Have you another horse?"

"Ah, if Monsieur will only get on! It is a very good beast."

"Very well," said I, "then I will walk;" and I started to follow the party on foot. This brought the senior proprietor to terms, and I soon had a fairly decent mount. I noticed that the guide rode the rejected beast and was not in a very good humor. Two small boys also accompanied us on foot under the mistaken impression that they were of some use.

It was a day to be remembered. In the first place the novices got on badly, so badly in fact that I made a mental note to the effect that people who do not know how to ride ought to learn in private. It was impossible to walk all the way, and when those raw-boned horses trotted, the girls went thumping up and down in the saddles until, I fear me, they forgot it was a pleasure trip. One of them soon lost all her hair-pins, and as she had rather long red hair, she made a somewhat striking picture. The other novice was tender-hearted, and was several times reduced to tears

because one of the small boys, when we came to the steeper part, would cling to her horse's tail. Then the guide must take us a considerable distance out of our way to a forlorn old inn that we might buy some very poor red wine. We quite hurt his feelings by declining absolutely to have any of the stuff. He said that travelers always bought some. If he uses that argument in future, he will not be a truthful man.

The ride itself was an experience. We made our way through quaint little villages, where our small boys contended with other small boys for the profit of opening gates that had apparently been erected for this sole purpose. We rode among carefully tended vineyards, where brown-legged, red-cheeked boys, almost as beautiful as Apollo, were working over the dry volcanic soil. We climbed the gentle slopes of the mountain into the keener air, and all the while the prospect was growing more marvelous. Then the vineyards gave place to bare ashes, and mixed with these were copper-colored streams of lava, showing still the seethings and whirlpools of a more plastic period. And all the time we kept going up and up into the clear blue ether, and the world below was growing smaller.

The bridle-path came to an end in a wild little amphitheatre in the lava. It looked for all the world like a bandit's rendezvous, and it was filled with a group of picturesque natives, careless-looking, handsome fellows, who might well have played the tradi-

tional rôle. The girls were plainly frightened, and I was at a loss myself to guess why there was such a crowd of them. Our Prussian twisted his mustache, and looked as if he could care for the whole lot, if need be. We left our horses in this little amphitheatre, sheltered from the wind, which now blew very cold, and began to ascend the last part of the mountain on foot. The path was difficult. It was very steep, and led us over loose ashes that let you slip back so far at each step that sometimes you really wondered if you were making any progress at all. I noticed that four or five of the quasi-brigands came along with us, and that each carried a broad strap over his shoulder, with a loop at the end. I asked the guide what it meant, and intimated that their company was not wanted. He shrugged his shoulders as if to say that it was regrettable, but we could not always have things in this world just as we wanted them. When I came to a standstill, however, he explained that the gentlemen of the leather strap and doubtful civic position were making the ascent on their own responsibility to be on hand in case any of us grew tired and would like to be dragged up the mountain. There was, indeed, great likelihood that this would happen, for struggling through the loose ash and cinder played sad havoc with the heart as well as the legs, and we had frequently to stop for breath. One of the girls quite gave out, and was obliged to hire a man to pull her up the rest of the ascent. When we were all about exhausted, the

Prussian officer and myself included, the path mercifully turned, and we found ourselves on solid lava, with comparatively easy walking. At this point, the unemployed strappers slipped back quietly to their den, and in a flash I realized the trick they had played on us. We might just as well have come the whole distance on the solid lava. These fellows had deliberately led us up that ash pile to tire us all out and make their own services necessary.

But after we got a firm footing, it was a great experience, that climbing Vesuvius. At the crater itself it was absolutely terrifying. I have never seen anything so infernal, never anything that seemed quite so much like Milton's Paradise Lost. The ground itself was hot, and the whole top of the mountain shook with the oft-recurring explosions. Sulphur fumes and hydrochloric acid, and other foul smelling gases escaped from the cracks in the earth, and almost suffocated us. Great clouds of steam and volleys of stones were belched forth from the crater. It seemed, indeed, hardly safe for us to remain. The little stones came pattering down on our heads, and we had no assurance that larger ones might not follow their example. But the girls were plucky. They crawled with me to the very edge of the crater, and looked over into what seemed like the very mouth of hell. A sense of great horror seemed to settle down upon our spirits and crush us flat against the trembling rocks. No one spoke. Then by a common impulse, we pulled ourselves back from the edge of the crater, and slowly

made our way down the summit. It seemed to me that I was pushing against an irresistible gravitation that would take me in spite of myself back to the crater and over the edge into the abyss itself. I understood how a bird may be fascinated and fly into the open mouth of the serpent; or how a man through very horror may plunge headlong from a precipice. I had the same sense of conflict in making my way from the boiling, seething pools in the Yellowstone. A cold wind swept over Vesuvius, yet the perspiration stood in great beads on my forehead. I looked at the girls. They had hold of hands, and in their awe-struck faces I could see the same horror that was weighing on my own spirit.

When we had descended to a safe distance, we sought a sheltered spot back of some great blocks of lava, and had the guide spread our lunch for us. We had brought along some eggs to cook in the hot ashes at the top, but it had been so terrifying up there that no one had thought to do it. The air had given us all keen appetites, and I lamented the loss of the eggs. "It is all right, sir," said the guide, placidly. "I had them cooked before we left the hotel." He had no conscience, that fellow. But I fear that I was more shocked by the unblushing way in which he let us see his evil-doing than by the evil-doing itself. We could not help laughing at his impudence, and though we disapproved of him, we ate the eggs. We found it very pleasant, lunching there in our nook in the lava, and looking down on Naples and its marvelous blue

bay, with Ischia and Capri in the offing. We were in high spirits, as people are prone to be after they have been imposed upon and ceased to resent it; have been in some danger and have escaped it; have been alarmed and have gotten over it. The descent, too, was great sport. As there was no longer any possible advantage in doing otherwise, the guide took us down in the quickest and easiest fashion. This was generally by way of the ash heaps, where each step, with the slipping, carried us down four or five feet at a time.

We met some Cook's tourists on their way up. They had come nearly to the top on the ambitious little railway. There were three in the party, an Englishman and his two daughters. The man was rather stout, and was red in the face to the verge of apoplexy. Four men were carrying him up the mountain, and considering the difficulty of the undertaking, they seemed, even to the Prussian, to be doing it very well. But it failed to please the choleric old Englishman, and he was cursing them up and down, individually and collectively, in a way that was shocking to hear. The daughters, sweet-faced young English girls, were provided only with one man apiece, and seemed to be getting on very well. I looked at the English girls curiously to see how the old gentleman's profanity affected them. They looked as non-committal as only well-bred English girls can, and one of them said to the other, — I suppose it was Edith to Ethel, — "It is really very hard on poor papa, is n't it?" And

Ethel said to Edith, "Dreadfully hard, and how well he is standing it."

This was not my own view of the case, nor was it apparently the view of the American girls, for I am sorry to say, they giggled.

On the whole, the English are tolerably conscientious sightseers, but they make rather a grave business of it. The Englishman looks up and says, "The Jungfrau, ah, yes," and makes a note that he has seen it; then goes on to bag other game. But no nation equals the French in its blissful ignoring of Nature. They used to come down to Geneva, and one would say to the other, "Mont Blanc, oui, oui," when they were looking straight at the Juras. The Châtelaine tells me that during the war, both French and Germans came to Geneva, and that the ordinary German soldiers knew more geography than the French officers. This may account for the French fondness for trying to change geography.

We left the profane Englishman and his sweet-faced daughters in ashes if not in sackcloth, and came on our own way rejoicing. The Prussian quite redeemed himself by offering to escort the two novices, and allow the one good horsewoman and me to have a splendid ride back to the Pension Suisse. Late in the afternoon they all went up to Naples. I remained at the pension, however, in the joint keeping of the senior and junior proprietors, as I wanted to spend the next morning in ancient Pompeii.

It had been a day full of unusual experiences, but

I was still to meet the greatest one. I had been over to the station to see the American girls off to Naples, and as it was not quite time for the table d'hôte, I strolled into the bureau of the hotel and glanced over the register. It is a thing I hardly ever do, for a hotel register is a collection of hieroglyphics that I dislike to think of as human. Why I should have done it at that shabby little place, I am still at a loss to know.

Three days before my own coming, I found an entry that made my heart stand still for a moment and then thump so riotously that I was like to suffocate. It read, "Mrs. LeRoy Ravenel and maid, New Orleans," and then on the next line, "Margaret Ravenel, New Orleans."

I looked at the names like one in a dream. I rubbed my eyes and looked again. It seemed utterly impossible. I went out into the darkness and walked up and down the dusty road. Then I went back to the bureau and regarded the two names long and intently. The writing was strong and clear. It was a woman's hand, evidently a gentlewoman's. It was too bold and firm to be Mrs. Ravenel's. It must be Margaret's. There was no one in the bureau. I stooped over and kissed the shabby page. I examined the cabalistic characters that surrounded the names and made out that the Ravenels had left on the following day.

The head waiter came and fetched me to the dining-room. The table d'hôte was already in progress. The courses came and went. I suppose I tasted them. I

hardly know. I was not at Pompeii. I was back at New Orleans. I saw Margaret, saw her golden chestnut hair and great brown eyes, saw the blue gown made in the sailor fashion, smelled the sweet curling hair. And now Margaret was a woman. She was the woman whom I had been loving all these years as my ideal woman. She had made all other women impossible. A sense of utter loneliness came over me, a tremendous longing that seemed to sum up in one moment the unsatisfied heart needs of all the years. It was a pain such as I had never felt before. I bent before it like a reed before the wind, I who had always been so confident, so débonnaire, so happy, who had met the two great sorrows of my life, and in the end had robbed them of victory in robbing them of bitterness. The pain was intolerable. I left the table suddenly. I think it must have been before the dessert, for the senior proprietor came rushing after me to ask if Monsieur were ill or if the food did not suit him. I replied that I was not ill, and that doubtless the food was excellent, but that for the moment I preferred the fresh air.

I walked rapidly from the hotel, past the dépendance, and on into the country, how long or how great a distance I hardly know. Finally I realized that I had quite tired myself out. I sat down by the roadside. The moon was shining brightly. It was a very lonely place. It did not matter. If any one wanted my thousand francs, he might have them.

I had no right to think that Margaret would care

for me. We had been mere child lovers, and even then she had declared that she would never marry me. Perhaps she was already promised to some one else. Doubtless she had plenty of lovers. She could surely pick and choose.

Then came the thought, which cut me like a veritable knife, would I prefer her to all other women, even to that ideal woman I had created and dowered with her name? It was almost as if I had a wife. I had been living with her day and night for ten years. It was a transcendental passion, as strong and pure as flame itself. Could the living Margaret rival this comrade of the intellect? Could she be her peer? Could she take her place? Could she permanently supplant her? These were the questions that sent their sharp blades into the innermost recesses of my heart.

What if Margaret were narrow, like her mother, conventional in her politics and her religion, sucking the poison of an embittered past. She had lived in a provincial city. She had been a dutiful daughter, and doubtless she had breathed an atmosphere of blight and prejudice. There had been no one to save her from her mother, unless it were Peyton. Peyton! Why had she not married Peyton? He was the only one worthy of her; more worthy, heaven knows, than I am. But evidently she had not married him. The shabby register of the Pension Suisse bore witness to that. Could the boy be dead? Perhaps Margaret had not appreciated him. Or, perhaps, — but that

could not be possible, — perhaps she had kept me in her heart, and it had made another love impossible. Could it be that she, too, had created an ideal, and was loving that? Suppose I had come three days earlier, and we had met! Suppose we had been disappointed, the one in the other, and had had to rename our mended idols, what a ghastly thing it would have been. If Margaret were narrow and conventional and aristocratic, her ideal man would be the same. She would not comprehend me. I would shock her. I, a liberal, a radical, a lover of Emerson and Morris, a hot democrat, a believer in the new gospel. Margaret had been an imperious child, a queen among us children, but afterwards what had happened? It was impossible to say. One may not breathe malaria and not be poisoned by it. It was better, perhaps, that we had not met. I could not shatter my idol. I could not live without it. And yet — after all, how I longed to see Margaret, even on the narrow chance that the living Margaret and the ideal Margaret might not be foreign to each other.

The moon was still shining brightly, and all around me was the silence of the tomb. I felt a sudden chill and realized that I ought not to be sitting there so late into the night. I jumped up, and to warm myself, ran all the way back to the pension. When I came in, flushed and out of breath, I think I settled all doubts in the mind of the senior proprietor, — he put me down as crazy. My run sent the blood tin-

gling through my veins. In spite of all my doubts and questionings, a great joy was singing in my heart. It was the love that I had nursed so long, but until now had never felt. I do not blame the senior proprietor for thinking me quite crazy. He could not know what had happened. When a man stalks up and down a small salon until late into the night, and laughs softly to himself from time to time, it is certain that something has happened, and the senior proprietor, not being a man of sentiment, thought I had lost my wits rather than my heart. I think the son, with his white teeth and cheery laugh, might have understood.

I had to look once more at the register before I went to bed. "Mrs. LeRoy Ravenel *and maid*" — that rather bothered me. They had been simple folk in New Orleans. The maid seemed to introduce a complication, and bespeak a less simple mode of life. But when my eye passed on to the next line, — "Margaret Ravenel, New Orleans,"— I forgot everything else. Margaret was still alive. She was still Margaret Ravenel, and I, John Percyfield, was going to find her and to marry her.

This brought me back to the practical world, and I began, curiously for the first time, to wonder where the Ravenels had gone and how I was to find them. I questioned the senior proprietor. It was true that the Ravenels had stopped but one night. The young lady and her mother had visited the ruins. No, they had not gone up Vesuvius; Madame would scarcely have

been able. They had taken the train going north. This was all that I could get out of the senior proprietor, and, poor man, it was probably all that he knew. But acting on his theory in regard to myself, he gave random answers, such apparently as he thought would quiet me, and finally intimated that if Monsieur would *only* go to bed, doubtless in the morning everything could be happily arranged. I devoutly hoped so.

I had to take a good look at the senior proprietor. This man had seen Margaret, had seen her probably several times, seen her at her meals, in the salon, walking with her mother. But then it occurred to me that what he saw differed from what I should have seen quite as much as Ida's and Sophie's view of the sunset differed from Mademoiselle Werner's.

The next morning I awoke without any plans. I had a wild desire to take the first northern-bound train that came along, but I did not yield to it, for it seemed altogether foolish to start out to seek the Ravenels, without at least some clue to their destination. It occurred to me as a humorous possibility that if I stayed long enough at the Pension Suisse to reëstablish my reputation for sanity, I might get something more out of the senior proprietor, but that plan I also gave up. Finally I carried out my original purpose of visiting ancient Pompeii, but more, I think, because Margaret had been there only three days before and it was a comfort even to go over the same ground. When I came to Pompeii, I had expected to be tre-

mendously interested. I had read the "Last Days," and had brought my copy along, so as to go over parts of it on the very spot. Then the marvelous things from Pompeii in the museum at Naples had added to my enthusiasm. But the shabby register of the Pension Suisse had undone it all. I wandered through the ancient Pompeian streets and among the roofless houses. I sat in the home of Glaucus. I let the guide spin his interminable tale without interruption or comment. It was an unreal world to me, and I, a rosy-cheeked young man, and apparently of solid limb, was the veriest phantom of it all. Every place I turned, it was Margaret, and then again Margaret, and still once more Margaret.

There was only one thing that did fetch me out of my dream and hold me for some moments. It was a simple little thing — the deep ruts that had been worn in the lava paving-stones of the street by the passing of innumerable carts. It touched me very much, this sign of a forgotten human activity. I do not know why it is, but a worn stone always appeals to me in this way. Even the limestone of our beautiful Chester Valley, worn by the rain into rounded curves and creases, has this effect upon me, and when the wearing has been by human uses and by human feet, I am conscious of a tenderness and an emotion that I cannot well explain. It was so at the Château. The stone steps in the passageway have been worn down several inches by their centuries of human usage. Duke and peasant have passed, and repassed; Mar-

gherita and her little golden-haired son have been there. It makes the bygone days more real, and endears the old stones to me tremendously. Those deep ruts at Pompeii brought back the old, human, Roman life more vividly even than Bulwer had done it. And you may remember those curious old statues on the bridge of Karl Theodor, the one that spans the Neckar at Heidelberg. The rain of centuries has made furrows on their upturned faces, as if the poor pink sandstone had been worn with much weeping. The effect is almost grotesque, but instead of amusing me, it fills me with a strange pity.

In the afternoon I went up to Naples. On the train I found myself traveling in such circles in my thought that finally I had to force myself to think about other things. I amused myself by counting up the number of persons I had had to fee during my two days at Pompeii. It amounted by actual count to fifteen, and as this was exactly the number of porters at the station on my arrival, they had quite come even with me for not having more carryable and divisible luggage. I did not mind the money, for the total amount was small, but it seemed sad that in a country which had once been mistress of the world, such a large number of the people should now be reduced to this detestable form of beggary. Perhaps it is because she proved such a poor mistress, this imperial Rome. Although a lover, I was still a democrat.

At Naples I went to the Hôtel Riviera, which is,

as you may remember, directly on the Bay and near the Aquarium. This would be the natural position for a hotel with such a name, but it is never safe to take it for granted that name and location go together. At Antwerp, I once stopped at the Hôtel du Grand Miroir, and when I asked the waiter where their big mirror was kept, he shrugged his shoulders, as if it were a very silly question, and said, "Monsieur, it is but a name."

The Hôtel Riviera is an old place, and not over clean, but the situation is good, and for some reason or other, I always prefer to go there. I particularly like the old dining-room. There are many handsomer ones in Naples, but few of better proportions. It opens, too, on a delightful old garden, and indoors the sylvan effect is continued by the old-fashioned frescoes. That evening, the room was filled with people. As I was alone, I was given a place at the long table in the centre of the room. The tables were decorated with fruits and flowers, the lights sparkled, the waiters flew about, ministering to our wants like modern angels of mercy, with wings in their feet instead of on their shoulders. This was perhaps fortunate, as the wants of most of the guests appeared to be vinous and earthly. The ladies had on bright evening gowns, and most of the men were in their dress suits. It was altogether a gay and pretty scene, and I much wanted some one to talk to. I should even have been glad to have my aunt Percyfield. The people opposite were speaking French, but at a speed which completely left me out.

I did hear one of the women say that there were two kinds of trees in Italy, and one of them, the cypress, reminded her of a closed umbrella, while the other, the stone pine, was the umbrella opened. This seemed to her companions rather a clever characterization, for the remark was applauded and passed on. The people to my right were speaking more slowly, but in some altogether unknown tongue, so I put them down as Russians.

The lady at my left, however, was alone and spoke English, so I devoted myself to her. She was a woman almost sixty years old, with singularly placid face and movements. Her hair was dark gray. It was parted in the middle, and was drawn down over her ears in delightful, old-fashioned curves. She wore a black silk gown, with rather full Garibaldi sleeves, and about her neck there was the thinnest cambric collar, edged with a dainty hem. Similar cuffs folded back over the edge of her sleeves. She was a picturesque old gentlewoman, and very moderate, too, in the number of rings she wore on her fingers. I half guessed that she was an American, for European ladies are generally not moderate in this respect. I suppose the rings come to them as legacies, and have to be worn to show how many less estimable persons they have survived, — also to get the good of the legacies. But if they only knew what antiquity it suggests, they would give over the habit.

Furthermore, this gentlewoman to my left had nothing about her that could by any stretch of the

imagination be called modish, and that pleased me greatly.

It is one of the minor ambitions of my own life to be always out of the fashion, and I have Charlotte's word for it that I succeed. I am a tall and slender man; an example, I insist, of the coming type; and when I go to the tailor's, he says with the air of one initiated into holy mysteries, "We 're making the trousers rather tight, this year, sir;" and I make answer, "Nevertheless, my good man, I wish to cast a shadow. You will make the trousers as you always do, twenty-two inches at the knees, and twenty inches over the gaiters." He groans, but he does it, for while he disapproves of my taste, he likes the promptness with which I pay my bills. I believe that some of the gentlemen who are so particular about having their trousers tight are not as prompt, or, as Charlotte, that incorrigible punster, puts it, they are more fussy over their stripes than their checks. When we come to the coat, the tailor says coaxingly, "You 'd like to have your coat fit you this time, would n't you, sir?" and I answer cheerily, "Not a bit of it, — a bag, a sack, something I can jump into from the other side of the room, without taking particular aim, either." Again he groans and does it.

This unfashionable gentlewoman and I therefore made a proper pair. She had a nice voice, too, and altogether, we got on famously.

I thought it might amuse her to hear about my night's adventure at the dépendance, and so I told it

to her as picturesquely as I could. She was much interested, and I could not have asked for a better listener. When I got through, she looked up with a droll smile and said: "I thought I recognized your voice. I am the American lady."

Then she went on to tell me that she had spent a week at that crazy old dépendance, and that she had greatly enjoyed the quiet, for she had been traveling pretty steadily. She had come up to Naples only the morning before. When I asked her if she were not afraid to stop in such a lonely place, she answered quietly, —

"No, I was not afraid. For the past twenty years — that is, since I got control of my life — I have not known what fear is. I do not expect evil, and it does not come."

In a younger person this might have sounded like bravado. In her it was charming.

The American lady had been at the Pension Suisse a week, — then she must have seen Margaret? I fell to questioning her. Yes, she remembered the Ravenels. Mrs. Ravenel seemed rather feeble and broken in health, but the daughter was splendid, a regular beauty. Did I know them? Yes? Then surely I must admire Miss Ravenel. One could not help it. She had hoped that the Ravenels might remain for several days, but they had only stopped for the one night. No, she did not know where they were going, but she thought to the north, — to Lombardy, or it might have been to Switzerland. She did not know;

she had seen them for such a short time. But with Miss Ravenel it was a case of love at first sight. She would go some distance to see her again. Much else that was very pleasant to me to hear, this American lady said, and you may be quite sure that I found her a most delightful companion. I did not tell her how anxious I was to find the Ravenels, but she easily guessed it. When we separated, at the end of the long table d'hote, she said to me: —

"If I were you, my friend, — you will let me call you that, since we have gone through such terrible adventures together, and since we both admire the same young lady, — if I were you, I would ask at the Poste Restante, and at the principal bankers, and at some of the more probable hotels. Europe is a big place, but, after all, the routes of travel are well marked out, and people are pretty sure to meet — when they want to."

I thanked her heartily. The next day I followed her advice. I inquired at the Poste Restante, at all the principal bankers, and at a weary lot of hotels and pensions, but I could not find any present trace of the Ravenels. They had been at the Hôtel Bristol for several days, but it had been some time before, on their way to Pompeii, and they had evidently gone directly north on their return, without making a second stop in Naples. I was sadly disappointed, and it was while I was in this discouraged mood that I did something quite unworthy of myself. I went back to Pompeii on the following day to see if there had been

any one in attendance on the Ravenels who might possibly pass as Margaret's lover. At the Bristol, their names on the register had been followed by the name of a Mr. George H. Townshend, of Baltimore. It was a splendid, manly signature, and I could easily associate it with Margaret's. By the time I got to Pompeii, however, I was thoroughly ashamed of myself to be spying on my lady's movements in this detective fashion. It was more worthy of a two-baths-a-week man than of a Percyfield. I turned around and went directly back to Naples on the next train, without going to the Pension Suisse, but I have always been ashamed that I came so near to doing a mean thing.

The journey lost me the express to Rome, and so I spent another night at the Hôtel Riviera. The American lady was still there. She had had a note from Margaret, considerably delayed by having gone first to Pompeii. She said to me at once, however, that it told nothing about their movements, not even where they were at the time, for it had been mailed on the train. She added modestly that it was merely to thank her for a trifling courtesy at Pompeii. I must have looked my disappointment, for the lady produced the note itself, and by way of comfort gave it to me. Apparently the best of women make these little slips. I could not well decline, for it would have been too outspoken a rebuke to my kind, unfashionable gentlewoman. I put the note in my pocket without looking at it, for I had not the slightest right to read it, and when I got to Rome, and

established once more on Monte Pincio at the Gianelli, I carefully burned the note. I did look at the signature just once, and I did kiss it, but that was all. I watched the flames devouring the bit of paper so fresh from Margaret's hand, and I felt a certain pang when it was quite reduced to ashes. But it was what my grandfather Percyfield would have done.

I had no more success at Rome than at Naples. I found that the Ravenels had been at the banker's, and that they had been for a short time at the Hôtel d' Italie, but it had been some weeks earlier, and evidently before their trip to Pompeii. I had to conclude that they had gone northward on one of the through *trains de luxe*, or else were making their way up the Adriatic side. Yet I was not at this time at all discouraged. I seldom thought of Mr. Townshend, of Baltimore, and his good handwriting; and when I did, I told myself that it was one chance in a thousand if the Ravenels even knew him. There was that joyous something that kept singing in my heart, and telling me that I should find Margaret. I grant that it was an unreasonable faith, but it kept me buoyant and happy and well.

I spent the rest of the winter and the early spring in Italy, chiefly in the north, looking at many things and all the time for one thing.

I lingered especially at Florence, for I felt sure that it was a place to attract Margaret. It has always been one of my own favorite cities. It seems to me that the very landscape there is full of intellect and

emotion. Nature herself seems controlled and disciplined and temperate, a counterpart to the best and loveliest in Florentine art. I was there when the almond blossoms were out in all their pink beauty, when the olive trees were putting out their tender leaves of silver-green, when the flower booths on the Lungarno and up on the Promenade Michelangelo were bowers of sweet-smelling bloom. I bought great bunches of the lovely Italian flowers of the spring, bought them for Margaret, and bent over them many times in my own apartment, but never sadly, always joyfully and hopefully.

I went often to the Uffizi and the Pitti. I stood for long moments before the picture of my mother, the one Murillo painted before ever she was born. Though the tears filled my eyes, I could look at it with loving pleasure, for the bitterness had gone out of my sorrow and I thanked God that love is immortal. Then I would go often into the octagonal chamber and hang over Guercino's picture of my dear little Peyton, a creature so superior to my poor self that it seemed to me as if Margaret must love him instead of me. And I wished for that more famous picture at the Louvre, which is the picture of Margaret's self. But really I had no need for it. I could see the oval of Margaret's dear face and the mass of chestnut curls, and the large brown eyes, and the blue gown made in the sailor fashion, quite as vividly as if the child had been before me. And in my heart was that happy something, a sacred presence singing to me night and day.

But the weeks passed, and I did not find the Ravenels.

I wrote incidentally to Charlotte that I had crossed the Ravenels' track at Pompeii, and told her what the American lady had said about Margaret. But I gave it merely as a news item, without any comment. Sometimes I feel a bit sorry for Charlotte that she does not know my secret. She has Frederic, to be sure, and even a very small son whom I have not yet seen, but it is different.

I even felt sorry for the people I met in the hotels and pensions. It seemed to me that they busied themselves with very unimportant matters, and when they did turn to love, they spoke lightly, and I either changed the subject or left the room. When one really loves, when the heart is stirred to its very depths, one is silent; or if one speaks, it is reverently, as one speaks of God, or of the Madonna. It is a consecration.

It is the same, I think, with an artist. He must work in secret. He cannot speak of what he means to do, — even of what he is doing. He can only shyly show the finished work. These inner reserves are necessary, a part of the reverence and sacredness of life. To publish them, even to speak of them, is a desecration, and heaven pity the man or woman who has not these holy secrets. Their lives are threadbare and faded like doubtful beauties under a Welsbach burner.

Charlotte is a good sister, the very best of sisters, and she understands and respects these moods. When

I work at home and cannot speak of my work, — we have invented a special term for it, — we call it "playing the violin." When Charlotte asks me what I have been doing, and I answer that I have been playing the violin, she understands and asks no more questions.

Early in May I went back to the Château, and I journeyed towards it as one does who is going home.

CHAPTER VIII

SUNSHINE

It is spring at the Château. The apple orchard under the south tower is one mass of pink and white bloom. As I stand at the open window of a morning, the perfume comes up to me in great draughts of sweetness. The luxuriant wistaria over the courtyard door has put out its fan-like plumes of light green leaf; the rich clusters of pale purple flowers stand out in gay relief against the sombre stone walls. The Châtelaine is very fond of her wistaria, and when I tell her that it comes from Philadelphia, and is named after our good old Dr. Caspar Wistar, I think she has an added respect for our intelligence and æsthetics. The early roses are out in full force, too, and the rough wall of the east wing is covered with a trellis full of their cheery yellow blossoms. The Virginia creeper has changed great sweeps of our dull gray walls to a tender green. On all sides there are signs of returning life. The tall and stately poplars have bedecked themselves once more, and even the large fir tree that stands in the centre of the courtyard has its tips of renewed green.

The snow still lingers on the top of the Juras. They stand out white and pure against the intense blue of

the sky. Lower down, the trees are showing that tender, greenish gray that I love so well to see spreading over our own beautiful Chester Valley in early May. The Lake has lost the sombre cast of winter, the cold, muddy gray that sends such a chill to the heart. It is once more alive and warm with color, the deepest blue, with here and there a patch of exquisite turquoise. On all sides one sees that marvelous renewal of life which makes the spring the best season of all the year.

The spirit of the spring penetrates to the innermost corners of the Château, and reaches even the apathetic Scotland. She gives up her letter-writing and her novels, and is as keen to be abroad as any of us. She has taken to rowing on the lake, with England and Ireland for company, when they will intrust themselves to her somewhat erratic boatmanship. She even rides Coco, much to my approval and somewhat to my inconvenience. She is quite like another person, and much more charming than I had supposed possible. I cannot imagine what it all means; I fancy there is something more than the spring back of it. I expect any day to see that barelegged laird turn up.

The infection has spread to all of the United Kingdom. Ireland has begun taking lessons on the wheel, and is astonishing everybody by becoming a fairly good rider. England will have none of it, and is openly solicitous about Ireland's undertaking such novelties. England has her own enthusiasms, however. She has gone so far as to buy a tennis racket,

— which she never uses. She has also taken to walking, and goes as much as a couple of miles at a time. I have offered to wheel around the lake with Ireland, and to climb the Dole with England, but neither offer has as yet been accepted.

The Châtelaine is quite the busiest of all the ladies. She goes out on her wheel whenever I do. She superintends the planting of the garden and the trimming of the vines. She is constantly going and coming between the kind Madame du Chêne's and the Château, carrying seeds or plants or cuttings. It is good to see her, our dear Châtelaine, her cheeks aflame, her eyes sparkling, every movement instinct with life and good will.

I have fallen very easily into my old occupations, but everything goes at quickened speed. I write double stints and wheel double courses. I am up with the earliest, and midnight finds me still alert. I have resumed my French reading with the Châtelaine, and my music with Madame Martigny. I go to Mon Bijou and play simple four-hand pieces with Mademoiselle Werner. I take a hand in the occupations of the United Kingdom, even in Scotland's crooked rowing. I give Ireland some hints about her bicycle riding, and sometimes, of an afternoon, I walk with England up to the Douvaine route and back.

I have never been so active, so alert, so alive. The days are full of a gentle excitement, and we find an embarrassment of delightful things to do. We are all of us intoxicated. It is the spirit of the spring. And

we have all drunk deep of it. It enters with every breath we take. The Château itself is permeated with it, from the darkest corner of Coco's stall to the top of the weather-vane on the south tower. In the night, had we listened intently enough, I think we could have heard the green things around us growing. It is a delight to be alive. There is a sense of good fortune in the very air. It is not so much mirth, as an abiding happiness, for along with this exuberance of life there goes a certain seriousness that gives it balance and poise. There is a purpose in the activity. In the flowers, we have the promise of fruit.

It is the season for loving. Mr. Tennyson has something to say about this, — "In the spring, a young man's fancy" — I always liked that. But the last half line, I used to think, needed mending, — "lightly turns to thoughts of love," — for not knowing anything about it, I thought he meant "carelessly." I have more insight now. I see that he means "easily," or "sweetly," or "deeply," "reverently," or even "gravely." It is a part of the pulse-beat of things, part of the marvelous spirit of the spring, that spirit which so saturates one with happiness, and yet brings with it an undercurrent of unfulfilled desire, an unutterable longing for something, one knows not what. It comes most subtly in the afternoons, when the lengthening days fill one with a curious surprise, and the slanting sunlight, coming at unwonted hours, creates a fresh world of new desires. I could blame no one at such times for playing truant, and following whatever will-

o'-the-wisp his fancy might catch for him. I marvel that schoolboys can stop in dull schoolrooms when the spirit of the spring is on them, and the slanting afternoon sun is calling. The little rascals are more docile than I should have been, had fate given me a schoolmaster instead of my wise old grandfather Percyfield. I found it hard enough at college, and indeed even there I sometimes gave in, and cut lecture or laboratory to steal off to the Fens, or down to the coast.

But this spring it is all curiously different. Life has never been so exuberant, and yet I have none of the unrest of previous years.

I have given up the idea of finding Margaret in Europe. I mean now to seek her at New Orleans, but it is not likely that she will return there before the autumn. And meanwhile, I have much to do. Love makes one very humble. I realize how little I have to offer Margaret, how little in the way of serious accomplishment. I have never been a lazy man, but my activities have been of rather an amateurish sort. I have the uncomfortable feeling that I have never yet done my best. I have the habit of work and the love for it. My grandfather Percyfield gave me both of these, when he seemed to more severe people to be giving me neither. And now I have the strongest motive to make the work more than good, — to make it the best that I am capable of.

But our dream life at the Château was suddenly interrupted.

I had been out one afternoon on Coco. It was one of the fairest of days. We had been over to Jussy, and around home by way of Vandœuvres and La Capite. The earth was fairly aglow with beauty. It seemed to me as if Nature must feel her own loveliness and consciously rejoice. There was a touch, too, of the spring languor in the air, just enough to restrain undue energy, and add a sense of tenderness to one's happiness. I came down the lovely avenue of oaks that leads from Collonge to the Château. I let Coco take his own pace, and Coco's pace, when the matter is left to him, is always slow. I was myself entirely occupied with the beauty all around me, and when I did think at all, it was about my work and plans. I came slowly riding into the courtyard, with that entire serenity which we usually do bring to meet the unexpected. I took Coco around to his quarters, and waited until Jean came to unsaddle him. Then I paused for some time to note the progress that our wistaria was making, and to admire afresh the delicate green mantle of the Virginia creeper. I pulled one of the yellow roses from the trellis, and stuck it in my buttonhole, for I have a foolish fondness for having a single flower in my hand or about my person. At last I went up the stone stairway towards my room, pulling off my riding-gloves as I went. There is a very pretty view of the courtyard from the window of the corridor on the first floor, and I paused for a few minutes to enjoy it. The afternoon was so heavenly that I could hardly bring myself to come entirely indoors. When

I turned to mount the next flight of steps to my own room in the south tower, I caught sight at the other end of the corridor of an old colored woman. She was evidently quite advanced in years, for her hair was perfectly white, but she still held herself wonderfully erect. I was considerably surprised, for the Château servants are all Swiss peasants, and it is rare to see a colored person, even in Geneva. The old woman came along the corridor, carrying a little tray in her hands, with a pot of tea on it, and a small pitcher of hot water. I had already started upstairs, but when the old woman reached the window and I could see her face, I wheeled around with a great shout, "Aunt Viney," I cried; "Aunt Viney!"

The old woman stopped and looked at me intently. The tray fell from her hands, and the teapot and water pitcher went crashing to the stone pavement. But Aunt Viney heeded them not. She grasped both of my hands in her two bony ones, and peered into my face. She was trembling with excitement. "Marsa John!" she exclaimed. "It 's Marsa John. I declar to goodness, it 's Marsa John. Oh, honey, whar you bin all these years? I done thought you were dead, fo' shuh. Mis' Marg'ret 'll be mighty pleased to see you agin, and so 'll Mis' Lucy."

"They are well?" I said eagerly.

"Mis' Marg'ret is, but Mis' Lucy 's not as peart as we-all 'ud like to have her; she certainly is not. I wur jist carryin' her some hot tea." Aunt Viney glanced down at the fragments for the first time,

and added simply, "I reckon I 'll have to git some more."

In spite of the fact that I had wrecked Mrs. Ravenel's cup of tea, I had to keep Aunt Viney a few moments longer to find out that Margaret and Mrs. Ravenel had reached the Château that afternoon; that they meant to stop for several weeks; that Mrs. Ravenel was lying down and Margaret attending her, and finally that both ladies would be at dinner. Then I let Aunt Viney go, charging her to tell the ladies how rejoiced I was at the prospect of seeing them. I snatched the rose from my buttonhole, and bade Aunt Viney give it to Margaret. I should like to have added, "With my love," but I did n't, and when I came to think about it, I knew that the rose would speak for itself.

And Aunt Viney was Mrs. Ravenel's maid! What a great stupid I had been.

I finished the stairs much less serenely than I began them. It would be difficult to say what I was thinking about, for my thoughts were in a great jumble. Probably I was not thinking at all, for I was so taken up with the sense that Margaret was here, at the Château, and that I should see her in less than two hours!

When I got to my room, I threw open the windows very wide, and stood looking down at the apple blossoms. Then I walked up and down the room. Finally I threw myself into the bent-wood rocker that the Châtelaine had provided for American rest-

lessness, and simply waited. I had much better have been dressing for dinner, but that not being our custom at the Château, it did not occur to me. I believe I did wash my hands and face and brush my hair, but that was all. As the dinner hour approached, — and I looked at my watch often enough to keep pretty good track of the time, — I found myself growing almost afraid. So much seemed hanging in the balance, not only the present and the future, but in a way, even the sincerity of the past, for I was to find out whether I had been worshiping a reality or a mirage. Had Charlotte been there then, I think I could have told her everything. What a comfort she would have been. But I should not have asked her advice. I knew perfectly well what I was going to do. I was going to be my natural self, as nearly as could be, and let come what would come. When it was too late, I did think about dressing, but on the whole I was glad that I could not do so. In an excess of honesty I decided that Margaret must see me just as I was, in everything, just a plain, homely man, with more taste than talent.

At last the room, big as it is, got too small for me, and I went downstairs to the garden. I busied myself hunting the trellis for another rose, as nearly like the one I had sent Margaret as possible. After a bit I found one, the exact counterpart, and put it in my buttonhole. As I did so, I heard some one say, in a clear, imperious voice that was both familiar and unfamiliar, "I think this must be Mr. Percyfield."

I turned around. There stood Margaret.

I don't know what I said, for all my customary address seemed to desert me, and I might as well have been a shy schoolboy. I remember that I took Margaret's hand, and that I did it most clumsily. The whole meeting would have been foolishly awkward, had not Margaret said, with ready tact, "It seems to me, Mr. Percyfield, that you are very hard to please in the matter of roses."

She had evidently been in the garden for some moments, and had observed my very slow selection.

This put me at my ease at once, and I answered gayly, "You know men are always stupid about matching things. I was hunting a rose precisely like the one I sent you."

Margaret had the rose pinned to her gown. She looked down at it and then at mine, and said, impartially, "Well, at any rate, you have succeeded admirably."

Then we turned away from the trellis and walked towards the Lake, and I had a chance to tell her how happy I was to be meeting her again.

"It has been a long time, has it not?" Margaret said. "More than a dozen years, I think. We shall have to be getting acquainted over again. We seem destined always to start our acquaintance in a garden."

"It was Moses' idea of paradise, you know," I said quickly.

Margaret laughed. "Yes," she said; "when I have been a little homesick over here, the old garden

at Arlington has seemed like paradise. But do you always have dinner so late? I am growing frightfully hungry. If there were any apples in this garden, I should be tempted to imitate my remote grandmother, and steal one."

"There will be in time, you see; we 've a great wealth of blossom. But I can promise you that we 've no serpents, and all you do will have to be on your own responsibility."

Margaret made a wry face. "That sounds tremendous," she said; "I think I shall not want to steal one, after that. But tell me, what good fortune brings you to this delightful old Château?"

"It was evidently the chance of meeting you. I came abroad for the indeterminate good."

"That is very pretty," Margaret answered, "and also a little involved. I like your Quaker plainness of speech better; such as your grandfather sometimes used."

"If thee prefers it," I answered, mockingly, "it is my home, this old Château, and it is thee who arrives and must explain thy coming."

"There is nothing to explain about us," Margaret replied; "we have been coming and going the past seven months or more. We are doing a very commonplace thing, simply making the grand tour, partly for my mother's health, but chiefly, I think, because I was growing restless in New Orleans, and this was the only relief that offered." I thought there was a little wistfulness in Margaret's voice. She did not mean

it to be noticed, however, and added brightly, "I'm sure you have a more interesting story to tell. You men have so much better chance than we have. Mademoiselle de Candolle tells me that you have been here for some months."

We were walking up and down the avenue under the poplars. I did not take Margaret to the summer house, — her summer house as I always called it in my thoughts. I was saving it until later, perhaps until I was sure that it belonged to her.

I told Margaret a little of my life at the Château, and what I was doing there, omitting, as it seems that one usually must, the most important part of the story. I had a chance to watch Margaret as we walked. I was not at first impressed with the radiant beauty of which the American lady had spoken. Margaret was undoubtedly beautiful, but I had to get accustomed to her beauty, and indeed to get acquainted with her. The years had made a difference. I had been worshiping a child, a little girl with large brown eyes, and long, sweet-smelling chestnut curls; an impulsive little creature in a blue gown made after the sailor fashion. But now, I was talking to a woman, and at first her resemblance to my dream-child tantalized me more than it comforted me. It seemed to tell me that Margaret, my first love, was gone, was more than dead, and to do it before I was at all sure that a second Margaret was coming to take her place.

As I talked to Margaret I searched her face eagerly, and every time I found some familiar feature, some

old-time movement, I felt a great heart throb. There were the same deep brown eyes, but they seemed smaller, now that they were set in the woman's larger face. There was the same abundant chestnut hair, but it was gathered into a coil and showed less of its wayward curliness. It was silly to expect this stately young woman to affect simple sailor blouses of blue serge, but I could not help being disappointed that she did not. In its place she had a brown, tailor-made gown, quite irreproachable, I suppose, from a woman's point of view, but to a man's uninstructed eyes somewhat lacking in individuality. I have heard it said that women dress to please the men, but this is utter nonsense. They dress to please themselves or other women, or, for that matter, to please the dressmaker. If we men dressed them, I am sure of one thing, they would not all dress alike.

You may think that I was a poor sort of lover to be so calmly critical of Margaret, but you must remember that while I was a lover, I was not surely hers.

Our talk, indeed, was far from lover-like. It was mainly about Europe and travel, and about Mrs. Ravenel's health, and the outer facts of life. I noticed that I fell very naturally into the habit of calling Margaret, Miss Ravenel. I had no desire to call her Margaret. How could I have, when I was not sure that it was the real Margaret? I was simply a friendly gentleman on the easy terms of a former friendship, and making himself as agreeable as a not over-kind

Nature had made possible. And Margaret was simply a well-poised, well-bred girl, willing to charm, if she must, but, thank heaven, entirely devoid of coquetry, and talking as simply and naturally as Charlotte would have done. Margaret was frankly pleased to meet an old friend and exchange experiences with him, but as far as I could see, that was all. She had apparently forgotten that we had been child lovers.

But I was not always so unmoved. There were certain notes in Margaret's voice, and in her laugh that sent a thrill through me and carried me back with a sweep to the old mansion on St. Charles Street. Then, for a moment, I was the hot little lover of the old time. And when Margaret smiled, the years vanished, and my dream-child stood for an instant before me. But the next instant it was Miss Ravenel that I saw.

When the old bell in the south tower rang out for dinner, I took Margaret through the archway into the courtyard. I was pleased to see her falling under the spell of my dear Château. "What a perfectly delightful place it is," she exclaimed, eagerly, "I do not wonder that you are enchanted with it. I should like to live here always."

We went first to the drawing-room, where the United Kingdom had assembled to meet our new pensionnaires. I could see at once that England and Ireland were greatly impressed with Margaret's beauty and charm. I foresaw that they would be good friends, and I was proud of England and Ireland, the

dear old ladies. They were worthy representatives of their country, if they were all wrong in their politics, and they upheld the dignity of the Château splendidly. Ireland had on one of her old-fashioned silks, and her lovely pearls; and England, in spite of the advancing season, carried her black velvet and old lace with marked success. Scotland was the only one who behaved badly. She seemed to have fallen back at least eight months, and was as contrary and ungracious as could be. She had not forgotten, however, to put on her best frock.

Mrs. Ravenel soon joined us. She had changed much less than Margaret, and looked much stronger than I had expected to see her. It seemed to me that she had improved with the years. She still clung to her mourning, but her widow's cap had lavender ribbons, which went very well with her white hair, and she seemed in every way less absorbed and less selfish than I remembered her as a boy. Time and travel and Margaret's good influence had had their effect. My grandfather Percyfield was always very considerate of Mrs. Ravenel and would never let Charlotte or me say anything uncharitable about her. He always maintained that at heart she was a good woman, and that if we had had anything like the amount of trouble that had been her portion, we might not have come out of it any better. As I talked with Mrs. Ravenel for a few moments before we went into the *salle à manger*, I recalled all this, and I felt glad, as I so often did, to have my grandfather Percyfield's

opinions confirmed. Somehow I wished that he and my mother could know.

The Châtelaine meanwhile flew about from room to room, making everybody comfortable and happy, and delighted herself to have this pleasant addition to our company.

As we gathered around the dinner table, we seemed, if anything, rather over-rich in women, but otherwise the circle was faultless. It was Mrs. Ravenel who noticed the disproportion, as Southern women I think are apt to do, and said to the Châtelaine, "I am sorry, Mademoiselle de Candolle, to have brought you a couple more women. I think a couple of men would have been more acceptable."

Scotland said she thought so, too, which struck me as a curiously rude speech, so I hastened to add, "You could not have brought more welcome guests, dear Mrs. Ravenel. Had there been any change, I could wish that the two men might have come in addition, perhaps a barelegged laird for our friend from Scotland, and my dear Peyton to keep up the American contingent. You notice at present that Uncle Sam and John Bull are just balanced."

But Scotland did not like my pleasantry, and said nothing but disagreeable things all the rest of the dinner. I wonder if my gentle grandfather Percyfield could have stood up for Scotland. I expect so, for whatever was wrong with Scotland, he would have discovered it, but I had not the wit to.

After dinner we all went back to the drawing-room.

The Châtelaine made us a cheery fire of twigs and branches, and we formed a large circle around the hearth. I stationed myself near Mrs. Ravenel, rather from a feeling that it was the proper thing to do, and Margaret sat on the other side of the group. I was rather glad of this arrangement, for I had the pleasure of watching Margaret.

In these gatherings of ours in the drawing-room of the Château, we had rather cultivated the habit of talking in monologues. In a drawing-room there should be but one speaker at a time. A private call is the proper occasion for tête-à-têtes. But in a company of people, if half talk to the other half, the din is terrific, and nothing very much worth while is likely to be said. It is a custom which seems to make the whole company superfluous save the one person to whom you happen to be talking, or, worse still, to whom you are trying to listen. But if one person speaks and all the rest listen, there is comparative quiet, and the one speaker is apt to say far better things than if he were struggling in the general din to make one person hear him. I have noticed that deaf persons are usually spared the inanities which sometimes pass for conversation, — even the originators of the inanities hesitate to shout them. When you mean to tell a thing on the housetops, it is wise to see to it that the thing is worth telling. Talking in monologues demands the same precaution. It lifts conversation to a higher level, and makes a man bestir himself. He will not say the casual and incon-

siderate things to a group of people that he might lazily say to one. I had well drilled the Châtelaine and the United Kingdom in the theory and practice of the monologue. It was the less gracious task, perhaps, since I was usually the monologuer. But then, as England would say, you must usually pay a price for all benefits, must n't you ?

The ladies of the Château had their reward the evening Margaret came, and indeed many evenings thereafter. Margaret had not lost her old dramatic sense. Like everything else about her, it was less unrestrained, but it was there in full force, possibly even heightened. She no longer cared to faint and be carried off to the Castle of Monaco, but in telling us about their travels and adventures, she had the unconscious art of a great actress. Scene after scene passed before us, and with such vividness and such truth to the life that we were all taken by storm, except possibly Scotland, and I think that even she was not entirely unmoved. For myself, I was in the seventh heaven of delight. I had all the pleasure of the other listeners, and in addition a pleasure they could not know of. For me, it was a process of finding Margaret, of regaining my comrade. For once, I was glad to be the humblest of spectators. It mattered not that I had failed to call out this splendid dramatic touch when we were alone in the garden. It needed this group of people to do it. My theory of the monologue was working splendidly.

Later, Margaret went to the piano and played for

us. She refused to play Chopin, for she said he was too emotional. But she played Schumann and a little Beethoven. During the playing Scotland got up and left the room. I did not know what was the matter, but somehow I felt dreadfully sorry for her. Margaret broke off her playing much sooner than we wanted her to, for she declared that it was quite time to carry her mother off to bed, and that already the lady had been dissipating in sitting up so late. Mrs. Ravenel said kindly that it had been a long time since they had had so much temptation to dissipate. Then the mother and daughter withdrew, leaving in the drawing-room three admiring women and a bewildered man. England and Ireland and the Châtelaine were all loud in their praises of my countrywomen, and England said graciously that she quite understood why I was so proud of being an American.

We thought we were happy at the Château before, but after the coming of Margaret and her mother we were still happier, not I alone, but all of us, save possibly Scotland, who continued to act so strangely that I once asked the Châtelaine what could be the matter with her, but she would give me no direct answer, and said it was kinder not to ask.

So the spirit of the spring deepened at the Château, and each day became more lovely. Margaret could not have come at a better time. It seemed as if the earth had robed herself to meet her, and Margaret fell under the enchantment of it. The slight tone of wistfulness that I had noticed at our first meeting

never reappeared. I could see that Margaret was happier than she had been for some time. It is a way the Château has of making most people happy. I once told the Châtelaine that it was all a fable about the Château's having been built by the duke of Savoy, a transparent fable; that I knew better. It was an enchanted castle, and I trembled lest some morning I should waken and find there was no such place.

"And where would you be, then?" asked the Châtelaine, by way of disproof.

"In misery," said I, "dark, dank, dismal misery."

"I think it won't happen," said the Châtelaine, cheerily, "but you must make hay while the sun shines;" and she left me to guess her meaning. She is a sympathetic soul, is the Châtelaine, and often, when she looks at me with those clear, truth-loving gray eyes of hers, I fancy that she can read my very thoughts. I am very fond of the Châtelaine.

Outwardly, our life at the Château goes on much as usual. I seldom see Margaret until luncheon. She takes morning coffee with her mother in their rooms, and spends the greater part of the morning reading to her and waiting on her. When Mrs. Ravenel first came to the Château she did not rise until just time to dress for luncheon, and only then would Margaret resign her to the care of Aunt Viney. But Mrs. Ravenel has been growing stronger, Margaret and I both think, since she has come to Beau-Rivage, and now the rising hour is slipping along to eleven, and even half past ten. This gives Margaret more

leisure, but it avails nothing to me, for in the morning Margaret will never let me join her. If she walks in the garden, or pulls out a bit on the Lake, and I spy her from my window, as I am very likely to do, since I have dragged my big writing-table over to the window for that special purpose, I find it very difficult not to slip downstairs just for a moment to pass the time of day with Margaret. But she sends me back to my work at once and will have none of it.

She is so very severe that once I threatened to rebel, but she silenced me completely. She said their coming to the Château and our meeting had been a pure accident, and that if she found she was interrupting my work, she would whisk her mother and herself off in the night, and never let me know so much as where they had gone. From previous experience with a certain little girl in New Orleans, I half suspected that Margaret was capable of it. But I liked her the better for it. These little imperious ways of Margaret are inconvenient, but I welcomed them always, for they seemed to fuse the new Margaret into the old. I liked, too, the earnestness of it. It made me think that one can have a purpose in life on the lower Mississippi as well as on the Delaware.

But Margaret need not worry about my work. It is going on famously. She gave me an immense uplift when she wrote her name in the register at Pompeii, and the impulse is not spent. I think Charlotte, the wise one, would notice a difference in my work. I wrote her, of course, about the Ravenels' being at the

Château, and what a pleasure it is to have them here. But I have not told her of the curious drama that is going on in my own heart. Charlotte keeps writing for more news about Margaret, how I like her, and if I see much of her, and many other leading questions; for Charlotte, like most happily married people, is bent on getting all the rest of us happily married. I am afraid that my letters are rather unsatisfactory. At least Charlotte says they are, and Charlotte is nothing if not frank.

So I continue to work steadily for three or four hours every morning. But in the afternoons it is different.

Margaret also has theories, and one of them is that short hours of concentrated work are better than a whole day's dull grind. So she quite abets my spending the afternoons away from the south tower. Very often she joins me in an outing. Sometimes she feels that she must stop at home with her mother, and then you may be sure that I remain also. But Mrs. Ravenel is really the best-behaved old lady, given to invalidism, that we have ever had at the Château. Mademoiselle de Candolle says so. I am afraid this kind hostess of ours has had a series of curios, and alackaday, they have not all been European.

Mrs. Ravenel spends nearly every fine afternoon in the garden, attended always by the faithful Aunt Viney. England and Ireland have got into the way of joining her there. It is a pretty sight to see these elderly gentlewomen sitting under the great green

parasol of the sycamore tree or walking slowly up and down between the poplars.

When Mrs. Ravenel is so comfortably provided for, Margaret feels free for any outing I may propose. She has a delightful streak of adventure in her, and sometimes it puzzles me to find an outing quite exciting enough for her. However, the season itself is exciting; it is so beautiful. Margaret has never seen a Swiss summer, and her enthusiasm, added to mine, makes a pretty full charge. Sometimes we take the tram and go into Geneva to hunt for pretty things in the shops and to explore the old parts of the city. Once we bought some wood carvings at a little shop on the rue du Rhône, and the shopwoman offered to make out the bill for something less than the amount, so that the customs duty at home would be less. It is quite a common practice. I thought Margaret would annihilate the little woman, she was so indignant at the suggestion. At such times Margaret's eyes flash fire and she is radiantly beautiful. It is not a doll-baby sort of beauty, I assure you, but something much more fierce and volcanic.

Occasionally we take the steamboat at the Beau-Rivage landing and go over to Nyon or Morges. Once we went up the Dole together. Very frequently we are off on our wheels, the Châtelaine along with us. Margaret shares the Châtelaine's preference for the lower road along the Lake, and so we go often to Yvoire, the beautiful, and drink afternoon tea at Madame Thonon's little restaurant. The Swiss peasants

are rather a stolid people. I do not know whether it is their code of manners, or whether the constant presence in their beautiful country of such crowds of strangers breeds a certain indifference, but I think they stare less than any nation that I have acquaintance with. But they do stare at Margaret. She seems to fascinate them. They call her *la belle Américaine.* I think it is not so much her beauty that attracts them as a certain grace and her atmosphere of flawless, childlike goodness. It is natural for the Châtelaine to love Margaret, and for me she has a generous affection that I much value. I think she looks upon us both almost as her children. She was very fearful at first that she might be in the way, and I had some difficulty to reassure her. But she never could be in the way, and I should be a much more selfish fellow than I am if I denied the Châtelaine the frank pleasure she takes in Margaret. Indeed, there is no reason why she should not go along. Margaret is pleased to have me with her. I can readily see that, for she takes no pains to disguise it. But it seems to be the simple pleasure that any young woman might feel in the company of a man of average intelligence, and in part of a common past. Perhaps, too, it is a relief after the rather dreary round of female pensionnaires. Charlotte would not approve of this last remark.

Several times I have had another horse from the village, and with Margaret on the now properly behaved Coco we have made some glorious promenades *à cheval.* Margaret was delighted to get her

riding habit out. She said she had not worn it once since she had been in Europe. I had hoped that it would be blue, but it is dark green. However, it goes very well with Coco's gray flanks, and it suits Margaret quite as well. Margaret enjoys these rides and even Coco's latent willfulness. My own chestnut mount is nothing to boast of, but he has n't been able to throw me yet, so I do not mind. It seems to me, indeed, that each ride is better than the last, and I often wonder whether in all Europe there is a man quite so lucky as I am. On the whole, I think not.

But more frequently than anything else, we go to walk. We cannot go so far, but there are delightful little bypaths to explore, and every tramp we find some new beauty. In truth, one does not have to search for beauty when it is the springtime in Switzerland, and now that June has come, we have the more mature beauty of the early summer. There is less physical exultation in these walks than when we go on the saddle or in the saddle, — by which I mean a-wheeling or a-horseback riding, — but on the whole I enjoy them more. The talk is more connected. I get nearer to Margaret, and I am coming to know her better. We speak often of the child days at New Orleans. It gives me a thrill to find that Margaret dwells on them as lovingly as I do. The tears came to her eyes when I told her that my mother and my grandfather Percyfield were no longer at Uplands. She evidently keeps a warm spot for them in her heart, as she well may, for they loved her sincerely. And

Margaret has much to tell me of our old playfellows, Randolph and Peyton. They have turned out, she says, much as one might have expected. Randolph is a practical, hard-headed fellow, who manages the Bellevue plantation with great ability. He has married one of the younger Mason girls. And Peyton? Margaret says he is as beautiful as my Endymion, a dreamy fellow whom everybody loves, and whom everybody treats precisely as if he were a boy. Randolph, it seems, is considered the successful one, but he is not so much loved as Peyton. For one thing he is so busy; he has no time. But Peyton seems to have all the time there is. He has never married. The idea of his marrying amuses Margaret, for she evidently looks upon him as a mere boy. She says he has never done any special thing, but she believes he will some day, for he has qualities which no one else seems to possess. He writes verses, he paints a little, he plays and sings very sweetly, — in a word, he is an ideal comrade. Margaret speaks of him with enthusiasm, and I am not one whit jealous. I know that he is made of finer clay than ever I was, and that I can never hope to equal him, at least in this life. It has aroused all my old love for Peyton to have Margaret speak of him in this enthusiastic way. Could we have met him this afternoon in the beautiful wood path beyond Madame du Chêne's, where we happened to be walking when Margaret told me about him, I know I should have put my arms around him the way the burly Germans do — yes, and kissed him on both cheeks

as they do, too, and called him 'little brother.' Margaret made Peyton seem so real to me that I shall never again be able to see a narrow alley through the greenery without thinking of him; only it must have a clear blue sky end to it, or it would not stand for Peyton.

To be beautiful and good, to have all the world love you, what more could one ask of the gods. It is a poem, a picture, a symphony in itself.

We have spoken, too, about Charlotte, and it is pretty to see Margaret's affection rekindling as I go on to tell her at some length about this best of good sisters. And Margaret made me tell her about Frederic, and as much as possible about the little son that I have never seen. She was vastly interested, and set to work at once to make a pretty little jacket for the small boy. She had it sent off with a couple of gold pins before I supposed it could be well under way. I did not tell Margaret, but I happen to know that if this morsel of humanity should wear all his stick pins at once, he would resemble an animated pincushion. For a time, Charlotte used to begin her letters to me in this wise, — "To-day, the twenty-seventh came,"— and I always knew it referred to gold pins for the baby.

And now you may well be wondering what was going on in my own heart. Well, in truth, a great deal was happening, but, as usual, it was the unexpected. Every day I found in Miss Ravenel some charming reminder of the little Margaret, and I had

so many sudden heart throbs that I was like to set up a chronic palpitation. But I was not finding the ideal woman into which in my own thought the little Margaret had been growing. I was coming to learn, though, that when a man sets to work to create an ideal woman, he makes a pretty sad mess of it. It is not so simple an undertaking for us mortal men as was the process in Eden. And then after we get them created, if we had to marry them, I fancy we should be greatly bored and have a pretty miserable time of it generally.

The truth is that the real Margaret is a revelation to me. If I ask myself whether I love her or not, I can hardly say, for more than anything else I am bewildered. I know very well that I admire her. I know that I like to be with her better than with any one I have ever seen before, but she takes my breath away. Her whole nature is so much richer and fuller and more resourceful than the shadow woman that I have been living with, that I have to readjust myself. The shadow woman begins to seem like a dreadful prig, a bundle of abstract qualities, with the exquisite tenderness, the graciousness and charm that characterize red-blooded women all left out. And when you begin to suspect your idol of priggishness, you may know that it is soon about to be shattered, for of all the counterfeits of virtue, priggishness seems to me about the cheapest. As the weeks of this enchanted springtime and early summer go flying past, I confess that my poor idol is being completely shattered, and in the

garden of the heart, I dislike to come across even a fragment of it. Margaret has done this for me, — she has rescued me from being a doctrinaire in the matters of the heart. And that is really what is the matter with all old bachelors and sonneteers. They are so busy with their silly theorizing, they have n't any time to really love. The solid ground that remains to me is that I did love the little Margaret with the knightly passion of boyhood, more tender and more lasting, I think, than it is given to most boys to love, and that in the present Margaret I have a woman whom I neither love nor do not love.

In this way it has come about that the longer Margaret stops at the Château, the simpler and sweeter our intercourse becomes. There are no more scenes like that at the trellis when Margaret first came to the Château. In everything that she resembles the little Margaret, I love her, and in everything that she does not, I have to get acquainted with her. She is charmingly frank, even boyish, as we come to know each other better. If she happens to be in the garden of a morning, and sees me at my work before I spy her, — which does not happen to her very often, — she calls up to me in her sweet contralto, " Good-morning, Mr. Scribbler. The top of the morning to you, since you are up so high," and I call back to her, " Good-morning, Wood Sprite. It is you who keep me here. I 'm dreadfully afraid I shall fall." " You 'd better not," she cries, warningly ; " you know what will happen to you. You 'll be sent right back." Then

she moves away so that the work may go on undisturbed.

I have noticed that dark eyes in women very often go with contralto voices, and blue eyes with the soprano. I should not want to fancy Margaret with any other voice than just her own. Some of her notes are as rich and deep as a tenor's, and when she calls up to my tower, she falls quite naturally into the way of singing. She can yodel to perfection. I think this is another reason why the peasants like her.

As the weather grows warmer, Margaret has laid aside her conventional tailor-made gowns, and appears more and more in the simple white things that I love, — dimity, I think you call them; it sounds pretty at any rate. They make her look more girlish, more Southern, and anything that does this gives me an additional heart throb.

We have our windows open constantly now. One morning I heard Mrs. Ravenel whistle. It was the old aria, and meant "Margaret, come here." I listened breathlessly for the answer. It came, an octave higher, that second aria, "Yes, mother, I am coming." I am a foolish fellow, but I did no more work that morning. I was building bridges into the past.

These are rare days at the Château de Beau-Rivage and I think we are all of us the better for them. The rest, the simple country life, the happiness, are all doing Margaret a world of good. She fairly blossoms with all the other sweet things this marvelous spring. I can understand now why the American lady called

Margaret radiantly beautiful. I am finding her so, too. And it seems to me that Margaret shows each day some new suggestion of her old self, of the little Margaret that I love. It may be that unconsciously I am watching for these signs, or perhaps changes are taking place in Margaret, now that she is less worried about her mother. I think that many of these little things would have seemed to me, as indeed they are, nothing but trifles and would have passed quite unnoticed, if it were not for that curiously persistent character of my mental images which I have already mentioned. For the life of me I cannot help seeing the little Margaret, and I cannot help feeling perfectly delighted whenever the newer images coincide with the old ones. It was quite in line with these foolish fancies that I had the greatest desire to see Margaret with her hair down and dressed in a blue sailor gown. The thought kept bothering me all one morning until I was entirely vexed with myself for being so stupidly given to details. At luncheon, as if in answer to my thought, Margaret appeared with her hair down her back, a little wet and straggly, to be sure, but the same abundant chestnut curls and giving out the same sweet odor. It seems that Margaret and the Châtelaine had been in the Lake to bathe, the first plunge of the season, and to satisfy Mrs. Ravenel, Margaret had left her hair down until it should dry. She apologized very prettily for it. Then I had a sudden inspiration.

"The Lake has wet your hair in this thorough

fashion," said I, "it ought to be good enough to dry it for you. Let us go out in the boat directly after luncheon, and paddle around in the sun until your hair is quite dry."

Mrs. Ravenel much approved of so hygienic a plan and thanked me for it so genuinely that I was a bit ashamed to think that the plan had not a grain of altruism in it. Partly to please her mother, and partly because the prospect of having the wind sweep through her hair seemed agreeable, Margaret willingly fell in with the plan and went off to get ready. Then I had a second inspiration. I suggested that if she had a boating suit, she had better put it on, and added half jestingly that I should myself prefer blue to match the Lake and the sky, — it was a perfect day, and the Lake carried all shades of blue and turquoise, while the sky was a somewhat lighter tint. It was such an improbable hazard that I expected nothing to come of it, but I was mistaken. A few moments later Margaret appeared on our little quay. She had on a blue serge gown made with a sailor waist, and her long chestnut curls swept her shoulders. The illusion was complete. It was no longer Switzerland, but New Orleans. Better still, it was no longer Miss Ravenel, but the little Margaret, whom I seemed to be rowing about in the sunshine. I don't wonder that Fletcher Mason wanted to kiss her. As the wind tossed Margaret's curls about, and the sun brought out the golden gleam in them, they formed just such an aureole about the oval face, with its high cheek bones and sparkling

brown eyes, as I had often seen in our play at Hereford Hall. The face was just as resolute, just as imperious, but there was something more in it, an element that baffled me. You have the best chance in the world to study a face when you are in a small rowboat. It is natural to look straight ahead and this brings the stern seat directly into the foreground. I could not quite make out this new element in Margaret's face. It may have been an added tenderness, the touch of sorrow, for she has been much worried about her mother. Perhaps some other feelings are wakening in her soul. At any rate, she was very beautiful. It seemed to me that I was a boy again. It was natural for us to talk of New Orleans. I asked if she remembered our acting and the Castle of Monaco.

"Of course I do," she answered. "It was great fun, was n't it? Mother and I went to the real Castle last winter, and I could n't help thinking of the dining-room at dear old Arlington, all the time. I doubt if any little prince had as good a time as we did. Did you go to Monaco when you were on the Riviera?"

"Yes," I said, "I went there on purpose. I had hoped to find you there."

"Well, if you had come at the right time," Margaret answered, in that impartial way she has of turning the talk into less personal channels, "you might have taken mother and me through the Castle. But it seems, you did n't."

Now, she was just a trifle mischievous, quite as the

little Margaret might have been. But I was bent on reminiscing, and as I went on I grew rather bolder. "Do you remember," said I, "how I always told you I was going to marry you?"

Margaret answered with apparent unconcern, "And do you recall how I always said I would n't? But we had a good time, even if you were a dreadful tease. Do tell me more about Charlotte. I 'd much rather have you talk about her than about yourself. Does she still call you 'kin,' and does she live out at Uplands?" And quite whether I would or not, the talk glided into wider channels and it came time to go in.

We found Mrs. Ravenel in the garden, and I devoted myself to her while Margaret went to dress.

"Miss Ravenel tells me that you were at Monaco last winter," I said, by way of making conversation.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Ravenel, "Margaret would go there for the sake of old times. I think you had such a castle in your play, did you not? It is a very picturesque place. And we went on, of course, to Monte Carlo. But neither Margaret nor I cared to go into the Casino. It is a dreadful place, is it not? The gardens are very beautiful. I think I enjoyed the day there as much as any place we visited in Europe. We drove over from Nice." Mrs. Ravenel always spoke about Europe as if she were not in it, but had only been here and had got back to America. She went on talking pleasantly about their travels.

But I was a dull companion. What I was thinking

about all the time was this, that Margaret, like myself, had gone to Monaco on purpose to recall old days. It might have been a mere caprice, or it might have been from a deeper feeling. I kept wondering which it could be. But it was useless to try to fathom Margaret, when I could not fathom myself, for even then, had I asked myself whether I loved this beautiful countrywoman of mine, I could not have said. In the boat, there had been no mistake about it. I had loved her with my whole heart. But we were for the moment both children again. I could not say, now that we had come back to the present, how it was. It is one thing to admire a woman and quite another thing to love her. I should be sorry to love a woman whom I did not admire, for I should feel that the love was quite unworthy and must be put aside at whatever cost. But it would be just as sad a mistake to take admiration or fancy or any other sentiment whatever, for love. We can admire many people, fancy them, if you please, or even love them in a certain friendly way, but the grand passion, the love that either makes or mars one's life, that takes possession of one's very being, that makes one hot or cold, strong or weak, tempest or calm, that makes a London fog a paradise, or the Riviera a desert, this comes but once. It is a tremendous experience. God help the man or woman who gets a counterfeit.

My young friend, the artist, is always falling in love. At least he says he is. And the affair lasts sometimes as much as six months. The average is considerably

shorter than that. When I see him, I say to him, "Is it on or off?" and the answer is as likely to be one thing as the other. Or, sometimes, I say to him, "And at present, the name is ——?" or I threaten to buy him an alphabetical list of Christian names. And the droll part is that he keeps a journal and puts down all these experiences. He sends it to me from time to time to read. But we two are the only ones who ever see it, so you must not think there is any sacrilege. It is a dainty record, very sweet and wholesome, a series of little pastorals, like a morning in May, — but it is not love. What the artist loves is not these "dainty rogues in porcelain," as I call them, mimicking for the once the obscure Mr. Meredith, but the pretty idea of love. Sometimes I add a paragraph to the journal, and I am apt to say something like this, "Love and Fancy are twin sisters; a man must be careful not to mistake one for the other. The one leads to supreme happiness, the other to misery;" or else I write, "Do I love my love, or do I love the thought of being loved?" and let the pretty words go for what they are worth. But they apply, I think, more to women than to men. I fear me that women more often fall in love with the idea of being loved than with the man who loves them. We naturally do not hear as distinctly of refusals as we do of engagements, for a rejected lover is not apt to speak of the matter. There seem, however, to be more acceptances than refusals. When you consider that a woman's choice is limited to those who offer, I am left

between two opinions, either that women are very tender-hearted, or else that they love to be loved and are under an illusion. To be sure we once had a famous belle in Philadelphia, who married the hundredth man who proposed to her, and I believe did n't hit it off so very well either. She used to come out to Uplands sometimes when I was a boy, and Charlotte and I always stood in great awe of her, for she brought her maid and never took any breakfast. But one would not think of taking such a career seriously.

The artist is a sunny youngster, and when I say these things, he laughs and tells me I 'm a crooked old bachelor, and don't know anything about the matter. I think there ought to be a limit to that term, an old bachelor, and one ought not to be so called until one is at least thirty.

CHAPTER IX

INDOORS

You must not think that it was all sunshine at the Château this spring, — I mean literal sunshine. There were bits of nasty weather, rain and cold and wind, that made me think of the coming of spring in New England, a process which even the Boston people admit not to be entirely satisfactory. But there was sunshine indoors the whole time. In fact it is always sunshine where the dear Châtelaine is. She is cheery and bright, the brave little woman, whatever the weather or circumstance. The United Kingdom also, can ever be relied upon to have all flags flying, and of late even Scotland has come out of her trying humor, and is as well behaved as she knows how to be. When to this regular group you add Margaret, with her splendid beauty and high spirits and good health, and Mrs. Ravenel, with that later gentleness which always touches me so deeply, you will admit that we have very good society.

When I wrote to Charlotte, my letters were so bubbling over with happiness that they seemed fairly boastful. Had I been superstitious, I should always have touched wood in ending them, lest the gods be jealous and make the days less sunny. But this must

not be taken quite seriously, for I believe in happiness, and hold that it is a great pity that we do not have more of it. It is a quality you can cultivate. On the whole, I think it is more useful than mathematics, but this you must remember is the opinion of a man who never keeps accounts, and has not tasted the spiritual joy of having them come out to a penny at the end of the week or the fortnight.

It is a splendid thing to be young and strong and free, splendid to own the whole of your day, and to feel that no one else commands it, save as you give your moral assent to their demands. I have ever felt sorry for the men who take positions, greedy either of the honor or of the salary, for it is a dreadful thing to sell your time, your life, — a modern version of the world-old tragedy of slavery. I know all the plausibilities that surround the modern version ; how it is held to be useful, and unselfish, and a great opportunity, and quite the thing to do, and all the rest of it, and I do not believe them. One must be a man first and last and always.

After all, how much depends on our ideas. The practical Charlotte tells me that I have more taste than talent, but tragic as that is, one need not be down-hearted about it. There have been times, I confess, when I wrote gloomy verses about life's limitations, and when I had rather disgruntled moments with myself, in spite of my grandfather Percyfield's brave teaching. But truly I have given that all up. I am taking myself as I am, and such as it is, trying

to make the most of it. I am not clever and beautiful, like Peyton; or quick-witted, like Charlotte; or resourceful, like Margaret; and I used to take it hard that I was none of these things. But God, in his great goodness, granted me this boon, the *idea* of the splendor of life, and when I try to live up to that, it is sunshine always.

Since Margaret has come to the Château there have been moments when it seemed to me that I have more than my share of the happiness of life. The Puritan blood in me that comes from my grandfather Marston made me feel a little guilty at finding life so sweet. It is a curious tendency. And all the time there was a sort of double consciousness. I knew perfectly well in my heart that happiness is not a pension fund to be dealt out in driblets to widows and orphans, but a magnificent contagion. The more you have of it, the more you may have. It is very catching. In this spirit I set about making myself agreeable to the United Kingdom, and being additionally considerate of poor Mrs. Ravenel, who is really more of an invalid than I had thought. With Margaret and the Châtelaine, I am simply my happy self, and after all, that is the highest compliment you can pay a body.

Then, in addition to the good company, we have the Château, and this is a delight in all sorts and conditions of weather. In the tremendous garret over the main building of the Château we have set up a tennis court. The garret is paved with red tile, and a few chalk lines turned it into a respectable court. Mar-

garet, the Châtelaine, Scotland, and I made a good four, while England and Ireland were enthusiastic onlookers. I could never get England to initiate her new racket, and finally began to taunt her with being rheumatic and not wanting to show it, but she promptly displayed an iron ring which she had bought in Germany, and which she assured me was a positive warder-off of any such visitation. England is prone to take all remarks seriously, even the remarks of venders of iron rings. Margaret and Scotland usually played together, and the Châtelaine and I had to do our best, if we wanted to beat them. Margaret ever had ready tact. She divined that Scotland, for some reason, did not take to her, and this scheme of playing together did more to win Scotland over than anything Margaret could have done. I should have preferred to play with Margaret, for, as I have said, it gives you such a chummy feeling to be on the same side, but this other arrangement had the advantage that I could watch Margaret. It was almost as good as rowing her on the Lake.

Sometimes on rainy days Margaret and I used to go to the north tower, to the very top floor, and hang out of the window on the sheltered side to see if we could catch a glimpse of Mont Blanc. Usually it was hidden with the rest of the world in a mantle of fog or rain. But sometimes, through the *brouillard*, when the sun was shining on the topmost snow, we would get a curious glow that seemed like a spectral mountain. I remember the same effect at Tacoma in

looking at Mount Rainier. One could walk along the streets and glance in the direction of the great mountain without seeing a sign of it, only the low, scrubby hills that surround Puget Sound, and beyond them a purplish gray haze that seemed to bespeak unending space. In a few moments, if one looked again, the tremendous white cone of Rainier rose above the haze like the ghost of a mountain, or like a projection from some giant magic lantern on the curtain of the sky. The effect was absolutely startling.

I liked to be with Margaret in that old north tower. It has a double window. Margaret would take possession of one, and I of the other. I liked to feel that she was so near. Leaning on the window sill, with our heads out of the window and under the projecting dormer, we could talk together quite as if we had been out in space somewhere and had taken only our heads along with us. We could look down on the chimney pots and the tiled roof of the north wing of the Château, the wing that shelters Monsieur Coco. And that roof is well worth gazing upon. It is all shades of dull yellow and brown and brick-red, with here and there the bright green of some dainty moss, or the vivid yellow of a little lichen. I quite lost my heart to it the very first time the Châtelaine showed it to me, and decided then and there that when I come to build my house in America, I shall have just such a tiled roof. I was speaking about it one day to Margaret, and she said in great surprise, —

"Are you going to build a house? Shall you not be living at Uplands?"

"'Yes' to one part of your question, and 'No' to the other," I answered. "Uplands belongs to my aunt Percyfield, you know, during her lifetime. It is my home now, of course; but when I marry, I shall want a place all to Madame and myself."

"But what will you do with Uplands?" asked Margaret. "I cannot think of you as living anywhere else."

"I should hardly want to live there, and feel that my aunt Percyfield was in the way, as she surely would be, for she is not an agreeable old gentlewoman, you know."

"I think you once intimated as much," said Margaret, laughing.

"I should rather hate myself, too, to feel that I was waiting for dead men's shoes," I continued. "I want my aunt Percyfield to live a long, long time, — until she gets a deal better prepared for heaven than she is now," I added under my breath, but Margaret heard me and laughed in spite of her disapproval. — "And then when my aunt Percyfield does reach a saintly old age and is gathered to her fathers, I want Charlotte to have Uplands. She is not so much interested in architecture as I am, and would find it harder to build a place. Besides, she loves Uplands as much as I do, or nearly as much."

"You seem to have thought it all out," said Margaret. "Suppose that Madame objects?"

"But she won't," I answered gayly.

"How do you know?" persisted Margaret.

"Well, for one thing, we shall love each other so much that it won't make a rap's difference to either of us where we are, provided it 's beautiful and wholesome. Of course we should n't want to have colds in our heads or get malaria, for that would be most inartistic."

"You are an incorrigible dreamer," laughed Margaret. "But don't be too sure about Madame. You'd better have your place near the station so that she can go into town easily in case she gets bored or wants a new gown."

"There would be no one to bore her."

"That in itself might be the trouble, and you can't deny the necessity of the new gowns," said Margaret.

"Beauty unadorned, you know."

"Whipped cream and angel cake, with poetry for dessert," said Margaret, ironically; "but pray where is this Eden to be?"

"In some part of our beautiful Chester Valley, I hope, and within easy driving distance of Uplands."

"So that you can at least go and see your aunt Percyfield," suggested Margaret, mischievously.

"No; so that she can come and see us."

"And get converted, I suppose," added Margaret.

"Precisely."

"Shall you build a château?"

"Perhaps. I've thought of it, since I've come to love this one so much. Do you know that with just a

little altering of the plan this would make a splendid country house in America."

"Shall you call it the 'Château de Beau-Rivage'?"

"Hardly. That would be as bad as some of the names down at Bryn Mawr. We 've no water in the Chester Valley, you know, save the little Valley Creek. I had thought of the 'Château de Monrepos.' What do you think of that for a name?"

"It 's pretty enough," said Margaret, "but it sounds lazy for so active a man as you."

"Not a bit of it. It would be a protest against our American rush, a place for artists and musicians and writers to come for a time and catch their breath, for all my friends, indeed, who care for life more than for what they call 'business.'"

"Peyton, for instance?"

"Yes, Peyton of all people. A sort of artistic court, you know, with Madame as the gracious hostess."

"It sounds like 'The Princess,' with men at last admitted," said Margaret. "Did you think out the name, or did you borrow it?"

"I cribbed it straight and square from Carmen Sylva. It was the name of her home near Neuwied."

"I remember. And do you care for her?"

"Very much."

"But you never met any one like her, did you?"

"Yes. I think you are like her."

"That 's rather a bald compliment," said Margaret; and then after a moment's pause, she added, "But,

tell me, how *could* you ever reconcile yourself to live in a château when your neighbors had nothing but little wooden houses? I thought you were too much of a social democrat for that."

"You 're laughing at me."

"No, I 'm serious. And to name your château after the home of even a hard-working queen would shock your socialist friends."

"Yes, I 've thought of that. It seemed to me, though, that a court such as I want to establish, or rather such a court as I *shall* establish — for Madame is to be so clever that all things will be possible to her — such a court might help on democracy and internationalism. It would be the great object in establishing it. The ideas I stand for want to be lived out generously and splendidly, by clever people, not merely talked about in ugly little lecture halls in town."

"That 's perfectly true," said Margaret, "but you must be careful not to frighten your neighbors with too big ideas all at once. You would hate your château if you found it was a barrier between you and the people you wanted to reach, — just your plain, everyday neighbors."

"Of course I should. I am only toying with the idea of a château. In the end I shall probably build a story-and-a-half house, pretty, though, and low and rambling, and be content to call it 'Marston Grange.'"

"You might be just a little more aristocratic than that," said Margaret. "It 's such a wide jump from a château to a grange. Call it 'Marston Manor.'"

"The 'Manor' might shut out the neighbors."

"Not if the living-room were on the ground floor, and the front door stood wide open, and Madame be so beautiful and so clever as you say she is to be."

"When I think of Madame, I am inclined to name it the 'Castle of Monaco.'"

"That would be a stupid name," said Margaret in the most matter-of-fact way. "You 'd better show some respect to your remote ancestors and call it 'Hereford Hall.' But whatever you call it, I think you are quite right about the tiled roof. It will take you some time, though, to get one as pretty as this."

"No, indeed, it won't. I shall be as resourceful as the Count of Monte Cristo. I shall send to the Department of Agriculture and get some spores of bright green moss and vivid yellow lichen, and having deposited them with a little earth on my tiled roof, I shall have Pompey play the hose on them every day. We might gather such a look of respectable antiquity about us that even Professor Norton would be inclined to spare us in the general demolition of the ugly which he hopes some day to inaugurate."

"What a mixture of earnestness and nonsense you are, anyway," laughed Margaret.

I had no chance to give her any further evidence on this point, however, for just then we heard Mrs. Ravenel's whistle, and Margaret's little aria, an octave higher, rang out, "Yes, mother, I am coming," and it was good-by for that afternoon.

Then the drawing-room is a great resource in stormy weather. It is so big that we never felt ourselves prisoners. We could look out on the dripping orchard, or from the large west window could watch the Lake, and see how it and the Juras opposite were taking the rain. Margaret used to play and sing most obligingly, sometimes for hours together, and I could never get enough of it. At times I almost wished that it might rain forever, and nothing happen to interrupt the happy days we were having.

There is a big closet opening out of a corner of the drawing-room. In fact, it is a small room, only it has no window in it. The closet is filled with books, in French, for the most part, but also in English, and a few in German.

We read a number of the English books aloud, Margaret and I taking turns in reading, while Mrs. Ravenel and the others listened. Margaret read so much better than I did, that sometimes, after they had all gone to bed, and left me to my scales and études, I used to practice reading aloud. I tried to put into my own reading some of the dramatic force that made Margaret's reading so charming. I did not have the kind Mademoiselle Werner's thought to help me, but I think I made some progress.

When Margaret and I were left to ourselves we used to read French, sometimes looking over the same book, and sometimes taking turns in reading aloud. We chose French in order to get the different point of view, and also for the fine practice it gave us. My

own French is somewhat better than Margaret's, for my mother taught me so carefully when I was a boy. It was at Margaret's suggestion that we read the life of Carmen Sylva. She said laughingly that she wanted to see a picture of herself, but I quite declined to call it a picture, and said that they simply had genius in common. I had read the book before, but when I came to the death of the little Princess Marie I could not go on, it is so dreadfully sad. I tried very hard to swallow the lump in my throat, but it was no use. It was a little difficult, too, to see the words. I looked over at Margaret. Her own eyes were full of tears. Without saying anything, she reached over and took one side of the book, and we read it together silently. At the end of the chapter, Margaret went over to the piano and played for a time very softly and sweetly.

In the evening, the whole Château usually gathered in the drawing-room, — that is, Margaret and Mrs. Ravenel, the United Kingdom, and the Châtelaine, and myself. With my democratic ideas I should like to have had the servants, too. Of all of us, they seemed the most to need this glimpse into an ideal world. But it would have shocked Mrs. Ravenel and the imperialists, and, furthermore, the Châtelaine said it was regrettable, but doubtless it would bore the servants themselves. I told her that Mr. and Mrs. Emerson had once tried having their servant eat with them, and that they could stand it, but the servant could n't. "It is a story with both a funny and a

tragic side, is it not?" said the Châtelaine, and I liked her comment immensely. However, I often managed to smuggle Aunt Viney into the drawing-room under pretense of having her in attendance on Mrs. Ravenel.

When I build the Château de Monrepos, or Hereford Hall, or Marston Manor, or whatever my country house shall eventually be called, I mean to carry out this democratic purpose, and have the servants genuinely share in the spiritual life of the mansion. It seems to me a dreadful thing that we people who pride ourselves on being the flower of the human family should create about us such a brutal lot as the typical servants of the upper-class world. The servants in England are a particularly ghastly lot. The admitted ideal is to have them as wooden, as nearly automatic, as possible. The Germans are ahead of us Anglo-Saxons in that respect. They may be clumsy in their language, and put all their verbs into the second volume, but they have human relations with their servants. When Charlotte and I went from Zürich to London, we stopped for a time in Portland Square. The first morning, as I came down to breakfast, I saw a decent-looking woman sweeping the stairs. I said "Good-morning," as I always do at home. The woman looked at me in amazement, as if she had never, in the whole course of her genteel life, met such a manifest case of ill-breeding. I meant at first to stand out against that sort of thing, but in the end the environment won. After a few days, if an

English servant spoke to me, except, of course, to say "Thank you," in precisely the way talking dolls say "Mamma, Papa," I was as much astonished as if the piano had gently remarked, "Why don't you fix your hair?"

It was still too chilly for the elderly ladies to be in the garden after dark, even in the fairest of weather, so these evenings in the drawing-room became an established feature of our life at the Château. They did not lack variety. Everybody contributed something. The Châtelaine gave us the history of the Château, and many unwritten chapters of Genevois life. England and Ireland supplied anecdotes about the peasantry and the nobility. They seemed to be utterly ignorant of the great middle class of my dear Matthew Arnold. Even Scotland, to our surprise, gave us some Highland ballads, and recited them admirably. Aunt Viney sang us plantation melodies in a low falsetto voice, and occasionally the sweet revival hymns of the jubilee singers.

The United Kingdom like my American stories, and so does Mrs. Ravenel, for, as I have said, she never speaks of Europe as if she were really here, but always as if she were back in America. "Can't you tell us something about the South?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," I said; "I had no end of adventures when I was geologizing in Kentucky."

"Not in Bourbon County, I hope," said Mrs. Ravenel, smiling.

"No, indeed, it was farther east, where they prefer

not to pay any tax to Uncle Sam. It was in the moonshine counties along the Virginia border."

"Now, you 're talking American, and I don't understand a word of it," interrupted England.

"Then I 'll translate," said I, good-naturedly. "You must know that at home we have a federal tax on whiskey — called most appropriately *internal* revenue — and every distillery must be licensed by the central government. But up in the mountains of Kentucky, the doctrine of states' rights is very strong, and the people, even some of the best citizens, object to paying a federal tax. So they do their distilling secretly, usually of moonlight nights, and that 's the way they get the name of moonshiners."

"You let them off rather gently," murmured Mrs. Ravenel.

"You 're a very remarkable people," said England, who showed the fighting blood in her by being extremely fond of adventures, "just tell us all about it." She settled herself back in her armchair as if she expected me to talk for at least an hour. Perhaps the movement was prompted by experience.

"Well," said I, "to make a long story short" —

"No, make it long," said England emphatically.

So I began again. "Well, to make a short story long, directly after graduation I went out to Kentucky to make a geological report on some two hundred thousand acres of coal land owned by a couple of Philadelphia gentlemen," —

"That would be one hundred thousand acres apiece,"

said Scotland, whose mathematical proclivities I have already remarked.

— "I was armed with a sheepskin, a geological hammer, a compass, a notebook, a lead pencil, and a profound amount of ignorance" —

"Omit the obvious parts," suggested Margaret.

— "The land was distributed all over the mountains in tracts varying from forty or fifty acres up to enormous surveys of thirty-five thousand acres. I had my headquarters at Whitesburg, and went out into the surrounding districts, examining the tracts one by one. It was a rough country, and I traveled entirely on horseback. Strangers were rare in the mountains at that time, and I soon found myself a very well-known person. I was usually dubbed 'the mineral man,' however, and very seldom got the name of my ancestors. My guide, Adams, who was as tall and almost as slender as myself, rode a small black mule. He looked like Sancho Panza hunting for adventures. When I first got to Whitesburg, I asked Adams if it was a pretty orderly neighborhood, and he answered, 'Wal, thar 's right smart killin' goin' on.'"

"Was he what you call a moonshiner?" asked the Châtelaine.

"Yes, indeed, and a very thorough one. It was sometimes inconvenient, especially when I went over into the valley where the deputy sheriff lived. I always had to go alone, for the deputy had a warrant for Adams's arrest, and as Adams swore he 'd never be taken, it would have meant a sharp skirmish, and

perhaps something unpleasant. On one such occasion I had been obliged to stop at a wretched cabin overnight. I got away in the morning just as early as I possibly could. I had to cross from that valley to another, over a narrow mountain trail. It was a sweet morning. The sun was shining bright and clear, and the air had a little touch of frost in it. It must have been the latter part of October. I enjoyed my lonely ride immensely. I was glad my moonshiner guide and his black mule had to be elsewhere" —

"Were n't you afraid?" asked Mrs. Ravenel.

"Law, honey, Marsa John don' have no 'casion to be afeard when the rest of us is skeery," said Aunt Viney, impressively. She was over in a dark corner of the room where the whites of her eyes and her white hair were the most visible parts of her, and the effect, as you can imagine, was certainly striking. It was almost as if a sibyl had spoken. The Châtelaine is not accustomed to negroes, and looked absolutely startled. For the life of me I could not help laughing. I answered, as soon as I could, —

"There was nothing to be afraid of. I crossed the saddle of the mountain and was descending on the other side when I came to a rough cabin and a rougher clearing. The trail ran along one side of the fence. An old man was digging potatoes some distance away from the fence. I called out, 'Howdy,' and this," said I, turning to England, "is the mountain contraction for 'How do you do.' He called back, 'Howdy,' and added cheerfully, 'Wal, they ain't killed you yit?'

I pulled up my horse, 'Little Nell' I called her, and demanded quickly, 'What *do* you mean?' for the salutation was a bit jarring, even to an idealist. The old man put up his hand so as to shade his eyes from the sun, and took a good look at me. 'Oh,' said he, apologetically, 'you be the mineral man, be n't you? I mistook you fur one o' them surveyor fellers, and they allowed they was going to kill them. But you be all right.' It seems that many of the mountaineers are what we call 'squatters,' and have no deeds to their farms. Consequently when the holders of the government surveys come along to claim their property, the mountaineers have a way of shooting the surveyors in the back by way of preventing the lines from being run out. My greatest danger, in fact my only danger, was in being mistaken for somebody else."

"That would have been little comfort to your people, Mr. Percyfield, if you had got shot," said Ireland. "Were you often mistaken for somebody else?"

"Several times."

"Go right on and tell us about it," said England.

"One day I had a friend of mine down from Philadelphia, and a German geologist up from Birmingham. With Adams, there were four of us, and as we were all mounted, we made quite an impressive party. We were going to see some coal deposits over on a farm on Black Mountain. There was a level stretch of road just before we got to the cabin, and we took advantage of it to have a good gallop. We naturally made considerable clatter. It never occurred to me

that we might frighten the people in the cabin. We drew rein in front of the cabin, and Adams called out 'Hello!' for we wanted to see the owner of the farm and ask him some questions. A woman came to the door. 'Where 's your old man?' The woman was trembling, but she answered with a brave lie, 'He 's over yander in the field,' pointing to a distant clearing on the side of the mountain. Adams laughed good-naturedly. 'Don't you know me, Mirandy? Fetch out your old man. We ain't a-goin' to hurt him.' When the woman recognized Adams, she gave a little nervous laugh of relief that was half a sob, and brought out her husband from under the bed. They took us for revenue officers, you see, and the old man was a noted moonshiner."

"What a curious country," said Ireland. "I should have thought that your evicted peasantry would have made some demonstration against you as a representative of the landlords."

"But they were n't evicted," said I, amused at this application of Irish terms to free America. "And they were n't peasants, and there were no landlords; at least they got no rents. It was an open question as to who owned the land. There was one little corner down in Tennessee that a surveyor told me to his positive knowledge was covered by thirteen different claims."

"But did it never get you into trouble?" persisted Ireland, who had evidently heard nothing of the story of Mirandy, and had been dwelling on some experiences of her own in the matter of Irish evictions.

"Not exactly trouble," I answered. "I did have one funny experience, though. I was over on the Poor Fork of the Cumberland River, looking at some land that my Philadelphia men did not own, but wanted to buy. And well they might, for it had a seam of cannel coal on it ten feet thick. Adams did not know the country very well, and so we had always to get one of the mountaineers to go with us. That particular day we could get no one, as there was to be speaking at the schoolhouse over at the mouth of Clover Field Creek. A certain Mr. White was very anxious to go to Congress, and proposed to show the people why they ought to send him. As I could do little else, and had some curiosity to see the gathering, I went over with the rest. The crowd was so large that the schoolhouse would not hold it all, and it was decided to have the meeting out doors under the trees. Benches were brought out from the schoolhouse, and as many as could sat down. The rest of us stood in groups on the outskirts of the circle. Being so tall, and in different dress from the others, I made rather a prominent figure. Mr. White was a clever speaker. He did what I had supposed no one could do successfully, — he talked both water and whiskey. As we say in America, he carried a bucket on each shoulder, and he did n't spill a drop out of either bucket. The temperance people were delighted and the liquor people were delighted. Then Mr. White caught sight of me, and his eloquence took a new turn. 'If you send me to Congress,' he went on im-

pressively, 'I 'll get appropriation bills passed, and I 'll fix up this hyar Pore Fork of the Cumberland River,' — it was about a foot deep at the time and full of rocks, — 'so that when the floods of heaven come, you can float out your own coal and iron and timber and dried apples and geese feathers and 'sang, and not be selling your lands for a song to these foreigners.' Here all the people turned and looked disapprovingly at me. I felt mighty queer."

"And did they send him to Congress?" asked the practical England. "And did he do what he said he would?"

"Well, he went to Congress, and did what he could, I suppose. But the Poor Fork of the Cumberland continues to work after its own fashion, removing the mountains and casting them into the sea, as it is said that faith can, in very small grains at a time, and never by the boat load."

"You 're a very remarkable people," reiterated England.

"However, that was not what I started out to tell you. I meant to tell you how Adams and I once ran into the midst of a regular Kentucky family feud. It was the strangest adventure ever I had, and in some respects, the funniest, in spite of the fact that I almost lost my life" —

"You almost lost your *life!*" said Margaret, with such dramatic horror that every one turned and looked at her. She added more quietly, "I don't call that at all funny."

"No; that part was n't funny," I said gravely. "But the rest was." Then I turned to Mrs. Ravenel and asked, "Would it make you nervous to hear it?"

"I think not," she answered, "since you evidently got out of the adventure all right. Pray go on."

"You know something about the traditional family feuds in Kentucky? They are usually a very serious matter. It is hard to know just how they start. Some injury is done, or is thought to be done, to a certain family by some member of another family, and then the injured family never rests until it has had satisfactory revenge. This usually takes the form of provoking a quarrel, and so killing some member of the transgressing family. Then come reprisals on the other side, and so on to the third and fourth generations. Sometimes the quarrel smoulders for ten, twelve, even fifteen years, only to break out at last in some horrid act of violence. Eastern Kentucky, where I was at work, was particularly noted for these feuds. There was a notoriously bad one on just at that time, the famous Johnston-Howard feud. One of the Johnston boys had killed old man Howard on some very slight provocation, and the Howards and their friends had banded together and sworn that they would not rest until they had the life of some one of the Johnstons. The Johnston and the Howard plantations were both over on Yellow Creek, the one down at the Forks, and the other somewhat off the main stream, in what was known as Plumtree Hollow. For a time, therefore, the valley was the scene of a smouldering civil war.

There were a few neutral families, but nearly every plantation, through family connections and the like, sided with either the Johnstons or the Howards. At first the matter weighed very heavily on my own spirits, but of course in a wholly impersonal way. I was not required to take sides, and could go with perfect safety directly from one family to the other. After a time, however, I ceased to think about the feud, for I was getting more and more deeply interested in my geological work, and was finding the very simple key to the structure of the whole Eastern Kentucky coal field. You can't imagine how exciting it is to work out the geology of an entirely new district. I was in the field all the time now, and had Adams either digging or traveling, from morning to night. It was early in November, and we had to be very active to get anything accomplished, for the days were so short. I had occasion to go over to Yellow Creek. There was a tract of land near the head of the valley whose turn for examination had now come, and in addition there were several general observations that I wanted to make. Even then I forgot the feud.

"We got to the head of the valley early one afternoon. It was nasty weather, cold and drizzly, and I ought not to have been out in it, but I was so full of enthusiasm that I stuck to my work until nearly four o'clock. Then I realized that I was pretty wet and cold, and that we ought to be seeking shelter for the night. So I told Adams to put up his pick and untie Little Nell and the black mule, and we would go

down the valley in search of a stopping place. In a very few moments, we were both mounted and picking our way down the valley. The roads were so rough that we had to walk our animals practically all the way. The first house we came to was very fine for those parts. It must have had at least four rooms in it, and it was built of boards in place of the customary logs. We rode up to the house full of pleasant anticipations of good shelter and fare. We both called out a lusty 'Hello!' and in answer to it an old man came out of the house. I said, 'Howdy,' and then after the accepted phraseology of the mountains, asked if we could 'get to stop' overnight with him. He said he reckoned we could n't, for his 'daughter was mighty sick, plum nigh onto dyin', an' they was all purty much upset.' I was full of sympathy. It seemed a dreadful thing to have that young girl so ill out there in the wilderness, and so far from a doctor and proper medicines. I expressed my lively condolence. The old man received it cheerlessly, and as we could be of no service, we rode on down the valley, not a little depressed ourselves. I did not suspect for a moment that the old man was lying. The next house was of logs, but was attractive looking and quite surrounded with late fall flowers. I was anxious to stop, for I had found that flowers always meant pretty decent sort of people. When you do all your own work, and have to work pretty hard into the bargain, it means something to have a good flower garden. But Adams said we could n't stop there, for it was the house

of the Widow Wright. You must know that among these rough mountaineers a very primitive but a very strict etiquette prevails. There are no hotels whatever, and the law of hospitality requires that any cabin shall receive a stranger overnight, provided he present himself before dark, so that they can look him over well and see what sort of a person he is, and provided there is no sickness in the house. But one must never ask to stop if the man of the house is away, or if the establishment is that of a widow, even though in both cases there are grown-up sons who could well act the part of host. Furthermore, the stranger must never get off his horse until invited to do so. He must ride up and call 'Hello,' and only when the mountaineer says laconically, ''Light,' may he think of dismounting.

"I knew some of these rules, but I did not know how binding they were.

"We rode down the valley and into the gathering darkness. The cabins were half a mile, a mile, even two miles apart. It was rather a serious matter to miss 'getting to stop' at the cabin you had calculated on. In this case, the next cabin was fully two miles down the valley, and by the time we got there it was almost pitch dark. The cabin stood on the side of the mountain, some distance back from the road. We could just distinguish its dark outline, and a faint gleam of light coming from the one tiny window. We halted, and Adams gave the usual call. The door of the cabin opened. We could see a woman's figure

outlined in dark silhouette against the ruddy firelight of the interior. It looked very cheery, and already I was feeling more comfortable. But no, the woman could not take us in. She was sorry, she said, but her old man was away from home. With that she closed the door, and bolted it, I dare say, if there was such a thing as a bolt. I never suspected that she, too, was lying. The next cabin was another good two miles. It was still drizzling, and presently it grew so dark that literally I could not see my horse's head in front of me. The mule was now not even a black spot on the face of the earth, but part and parcel of the universal void. Adams got off, and floundered along as best he could on foot. I dropped my reins and simply let my horse follow. It was very slow traveling, and as you can imagine, extremely uncomfortable. Finally I said, 'Adams, the next cabin we come to, we will not ask them if they can keep us overnight. We will simply tie our horses to the fence, march up to the cabin, and say that we are very sorry to trouble them, but that if they can keep us, we shall be very much obliged, for really we cannot go a single step further.' Adams acquiesced, as he always did, but he ought never to have allowed me to do such a thing. We came near to paying dear for it. After what seemed an interminable time, — in reality, I suppose it was a trifle after eight, — we reached the next cabin. We rode in perfect silence. We were cold and hungry and wet, and in no mood for talking" —

"Your tale becomes improbable," said Margaret,

laughing. "You were never out of the mood for talking."

"Yes, I was," I answered stoutly, "for one time in my life at least. And indeed there was nothing to be said. Everything had been arranged beforehand. It did not occur to us that our movements might seem stealthy. I got out of my saddle very softly, for I was too stiff to move in a hurry. We tied our animals to the crazy Virginia fence, took our saddlebags, climbed the fence, and marched up through the old apple orchard to the cabin. The door was open, and we walked in. We found only three persons in the cabin, a glum, depressed-looking woman; a small child, howling vigorously and clinging to the woman's skirts, and a decrepit, bedridden man, who was chattering away for all he was worth. I could not understand a word that he said. The woman gave us no greeting whatever. I thought she was probably tired, and perhaps out of sorts at the prospect of having to get supper for two hungry men. I was sorry for her, and should have retreated, but we simply had to stop some place, so I said to her in my most Chesterfieldian manner, 'I 'm sorry, madam, to come in upon you at this late hour, but if you *can* give us some supper and a bed, I should count it a great favor, for the night is so bad,' — Miss Polyhymnia says I ought to say inclement, not bad, when I speak of so irresponsible a thing as the weather, — 'for the night is so bad and we are so wet and tired and hungry that we can hardly go a step farther.' I was a mere youngster

at the time, for I graduated, you know, when I was twenty, and as it was the following autumn, I still had what Charlotte called my cherubic smile, so that I knew in the end, the woman would give in " —

" What a young scamp you were," said England, shaking her finger at me. " Trying to wheedle a poor old woman in that fashion. If it had been I, I should have sent you supperless to the barn."

" No you would n't. You would have made me a cup of your very best tea, and got me some dainty slices of bread and butter, and some jam, just as you do here at the Château."

" Perhaps I should," admitted England. " But it would have been more than you deserved."

" I 'm accustomed to that, dear Madame. It 's the reward of deserving even a little," I replied gayly.

" *Please* go on with your story," said Margaret. " For if you don't, I shall have to take my mother to bed before the end of it ; " and then she inquired with mock anxiety, " *Has* it any end ? "

But I ignore this reference to the manner in which I spin my tales, and go straight ahead : " Well, the woman never did relent, as far as her manner went. She was just glum, first, last, and always, and the old man went on chattering at a great rate. But the woman put out a couple of chairs and said in a snappy way, as if it gave her a stitch in her side, ' Take a chair.' Adams and I sat down, side by side, like two little boys at school. Then the woman proceeded to get us our supper. When it was ready, she said in

the same economical way, 'Fetch up your chairs.' We needed no second bidding. The table was covered with mottled red oil-cloth, and as the rush-bottomed chairs were entirely too low, our heads came only a short distance above the table. When we spread out our elbows to cut anything on our plates we looked, as far as attitude went, precisely like the little cherubs in the Sistine Madonna. But what a supper it was. We had fried chicken, and eggs, and bacon, and corn-bread, and soda biscuit, and china-white butter, and apple sauce, and coffee as black as the night" — I heard Aunt Viney sigh. Her opinion of European cookery is not complimentary — "I am just running over the bill of fare to show you that my persuasive ways did tell, for it took just one hour to prepare that supper. I was at pains to tell the woman how good everything was, and though she only grunted, I know she was pleased. When at last we had finished, she took a candle and said, 'I 'll show you to your beds.' Happily there were two cabins, and Adams and I had the luxury of having one of them to ourselves. Often we had to share the same bed in one corner of a cabin already uncomfortably full. I have slept in a small cabin with thirteen people, three dogs, and a horrid kerosene lamp, — kept going because there were no matches left. I tumbled into bed at once, and was asleep without the least ado. But I woke up several times during the night to find Adams either going out of the cabin or just coming in. I would ask sleepily, 'What 's the matter, Adams?' and he would answer

invariably, 'Oh, nothing. I was just looking after the stock.' If I had been less sleepy, it might have occurred to me that this was very unusual attention. But it did n't. I simply turned over and went to sleep again. In the morning, I was up bright and early. It had cleared off during the night, and the day was perfect. The glum woman gave us our breakfast, and I paid her for our entertainment and for the feed of the animals. When we rode away, I think she said 'Good-by,' but if so, it was the only unnecessary word uttered during our stay.

"It was a heavenly morning. The rain had freshened everything it touched, and it had been persistent enough to touch about everything there was. Now, the sun was shining brightly and not a cloud was to be seen. When we got some distance away from the cabin, Adams turned to me and said, 'Did you notice anything queer about that place?' 'No,' I answered, 'I can't say that I did. I 've seen so much that is queer since I 've been out here in the mountains that the cabin we 've just left seemed much like the rest.' 'Well, there was something mighty queer about it,' said Adams, rather gravely for a reckless moonshiner, 'and it kept me plum uneasy the whole night. I know that at least three men make their home at that cabin, and there war n't nary a one to be found. I had to hunt my own feed for the stock and get on the best I could. It war n't till this morning that I found out what the matter was. There was a slip of a boy that came within hailing distance of

the barn. He was so plum scary I thought I 'd never git holt on him nohow. But at last I made him understand who I be, and got to talk with him a spell.' 'What did he say?' I asked eagerly, for by this time I *was* interested. Adams looked at me and said impressively. 'He said a lot of things, when he once got over bein' so skeery and found his tongue. For a fact, me and you came plum nigh to bein' filled up with bullets last night.' Adams made rather a long story of it, but the gist of the matter was that when we rode up to the cabin the night before, there were between eight and ten men belonging to the Johnston faction inside of the cabin, and they were expecting every minute some attack or demonstration from the Howards. As Adams and I gave no call and came up through the orchard so silently, the men mistook us for the Howard party. Every man there had a loaded gun or revolver, and it was the greatest wonder in the world that they did n't open fire upon us before they beat such a hasty retreat. But Fate had willed otherwise. The men evidently concluded from the seeming boldness of the attack that we were in large numbers and pretty determined. Every mother's son of them took to the woods and spent the night out, while we marched in and occupied their beds. It always amuses me when I think that I, a mere boy at the time, and as peaceable as they make them, should have routed nearly a dozen well-armed men, while I had only one retainer and

not so much as a pop-gun between us. But I think I have never been in greater danger."

"What cowards they were, to desert the woman and child!" said Margaret scornfully.

"And the poor old man," added Ireland gently.

"It was n't so bad as it seems," said I. "They knew that the woman and the child and old man were perfectly safe. Mountain etiquette is very strong on that point, even in feud time. The Howards would have had the whole countryside against them, kinsfolk and all, if they had touched the woman or child or old man. It is a law of the feud that a strong man must be struck down, the younger and stronger the better, the one that the family can least afford to lose, for the feud is senseless as well as cruel. They were as particular in selecting their victim as the Israelites were with the dumb brutes of their own sacrifices; or for that matter, as you imperialists are when you send your young men into unholy wars in Africa and the Philippines."

England ignored this thrust and said solemnly, "It was a most providential escape. I should think you would feel that a life so marvelously preserved ought to be devoted to missions."

"I do, Madame, but not for that reason. The Power that carried me into such danger was bound to get me out again, or else lose my future services, at least here on earth. Did you ever think of that? And did you ever think that the escapes of each day,

of each night, are quite as marvelous? But I had long before resolved to be a missionary."

"Then why have you never set about it?" demanded England quickly.

"I have," said I, with a twinkle in my eye. "Have I not been laboring for six months or more to convert you from your wicked, imperialistic notions?" — and I added more seriously — "And am I not going this very summer to London to see what the better-hearted among your own countrymen are doing towards saving their own people? And do I not return to America in the fall to throw myself into the very thick of this social fight? Believe me, my dear Madame, I am only over here sharpening my weapons. The new gospel of social democracy, of social Christianity, has truth back of it, and now it needs literary skill to carry it home to the people we most want to reach, to the people of brains as well as of heart. That is what I am working for. And I have been studying Europe that my democracy may be intelligent and cosmopolitan. We must know what forces we have to contend against. We must know what forces we have on our side. I do not want to be a doctrinaire, the holder of impossible views. I want to know the world and to act effectively. And do you know why I am mastering French so carefully? It is because the language is the most cosmopolitan we have, and one must be a master of it to fight the cause of internationalism. Madame, with my whole heart I am trying to serve God by hastening his kingdom."

All were silent. I had spoken more at length and more seriously than perhaps I ought to have done, but it was a profession of faith, a confession if you like, that I felt impelled to make.

It was England who broke the silence, "We might not all agree about details, as to how the world is to be saved, Mr. Percyfield, but it is pleasant to think that we are all seeking a common end. Each must do his best, as he sees it, must n't he?"

Margaret got up and went over and sat down beside her mother. "It is bedtime, is it not, mother mine?" she said affectionately. "Since Mr. Percyfield was not shot, we may sleep well and have no bad dreams."

"I suppose so," said Mrs. Ravenel, "but to make quite sure about the sleeping well, I think that Mr. Percyfield ought to tell us one more story that is altogether cheerful."

I felt as much myself, so I said, "Very well, but a short one. Shall it be of the South?"

"Yes, indeed," answered Mrs. Ravenel.

"Once upon a time, when I had on my famous seven-league boots, and was stalking across the mountains of western North Carolina, I came to a sweet little summer village called Highlands. It is in the very southwestern corner, near the South Carolina border. I found there as pretty a boarding-house as ever I met in the South. It was kept by a charming little old lady from Marblehead, a Miss Dixie. How she ever got so far from home, I was quite at a loss to

know, unless it were to make good her name. However, we were soon the best of friends, for I went to her with an introduction from a young fellow, evidently a favorite of hers. It was in the autumn and there were only a few boarders left. One of them was a Mrs. Toland, from New York. To say that any one is from New York is about the same as not to identify them. It is quite a different matter when you say they are from Philadelphia, or New Orleans, or Boston. Well, Mrs. Toland had a list of one hundred crazy sentences, anagrams I think you call them, and the letters of each sentence, when rearranged, made the name of some popular American newspaper. Mrs. Toland had worked out all but three, and these she could not get, so one evening at supper she distributed the refractory ones among three of us. My sentence was 'Search, mean villain.' I am very stupid about such matters, not being at all interested, and I promptly gave it up. After supper we went into the drawing-room, and gathered around the open fire. Miss Dixie had a lot of interesting things, cut glass that had been used to entertain Lafayette on his last visit to America, and a charming little gold watch with a bird's nest done in colored enamel on one lid. The first time Miss Dixie's father saw her mother, she was a little girl looking at a bird's nest, and the enamel had been done to order when they came to be engaged. And she had a lot of other things rich in sentiment. Miss Dixie had been showing them to us. Finally, she brought out a couple of old photographs, daguerreo-

types they were, and said she wanted to know what I thought of the faces. I handed them first to Mrs. Toland, asking her what she thought of them. But she gave them back, saying that she saw nothing special in them. Each was the picture of a lad, perhaps fifteen or sixteen years old, and evidently taken some years back. I don't know why I spoke so quickly and so confidently, but I said at once 'This one is given to close thinking, is probably a good mathematician, and the other one, I should say, is either a musician or an inventor.' Miss Dixie was greatly astonished. 'Why,' she cried, 'you 've struck it exactly. This one is a mathematician, and absolutely nothing else, and that one is at present the best amateur musician in Boston.'"

"I believe, Monsieur, that you *are* clairvoyant," said the Châtelaine.

"Perhaps it was telepathy," I said, and went on with my story. "After that we settled down to our reading. I remember that I had got hold of Water Babies. It so happened that I had never read it when I was a youngster, and I got so fascinated that I read the whole thing at one sitting. When Mrs. Toland went to bed, she said to me, 'You did n't solve my anagram.' 'No,' said I, 'but I 'll think about it just before I go to sleep and let unconscious cerebration act. I will give you the answer in the morning.' 'Well, if you do,' said Mrs. Toland, laughing, 'after your success with those photographs, I shall know for sure that you are a witch' — she meant 'wizard.' It

was after midnight when I finished my book and crept up to bed. I thought of that wretched anagram just before I went to sleep, but I tried to put it out of my mind, for the Water Babies had aroused a lot of new and interesting thoughts. When I woke the next morning the sun was streaming in at my open window. The first distinct thought I had was 'Nashville American.' I jumped out of bed and scribbled the words down on a bit of paper. I wrote 'search, mean villain' under them, and found of course that the letters exactly corresponded. When I went down to breakfast, I said triumphantly, 'Nashville American, — good morning, Mrs. Toland.' "

"And did it really come to you in the night?" said England; "how odd."

"Are you always so successful with photographs?" asked Margaret; "I have a lot that I shall have to show you."

"I think you 'd better not," I answered. "Once when the musician and I were tramping in Tennessee, — another Southern story, Mrs. Ravenel, — we stopped for some days at a delightful old log house on Roan Mountain. There were two attractive daughters there who had been educated at the convent at Hickory. The family were Catholics. One evening the elder girl got out her photographs and showed them to the musician and me. The photographs were mostly of young girls who had been with her at the convent, though there was also a sprinkling of handsome boys among them, as there ought to be, of course. Without

thinking, I began to express my opinion of the probable characteristics of the originals, girls and boys alike. In a moment, however, it occurred to me that it was a decidedly rude proceeding to be talking to a girl about her friends in this frank way and I hastily apologized. But the girl begged me to go on, and foolishly I did, describing the whole lot as honestly as I could, from first to last. She said I hit it perfectly in every single case. It was not a kind thing to do, and I should never be willing to do it again. Where the descriptions were unfavorable, they must have deepened the girl's own feeling. But the next morning I had my 'come-uppings.' The younger daughter, inspired by my success, brought me a photograph from her own collection and asked for as complete a history as I would be willing to give. I proceeded at considerable length, and with much too great assurance. When I finished, the girl took the photograph back and thanked me very nicely. I asked if I had been successful. She answered reluctantly, but with a smile she could not altogether hide, that the photograph was of her best friend, and that I had said exactly the reverse of what the girl really was."

The ladies joined me in a hearty laugh at my own expense, and the Châtelaine suggested charitably that perhaps the younger daughter was mistaken, and that I might have been right after all. It was kind in the Châtelaine, but I could lay no such flattering unction to my soul.

Mrs. Ravenel thought that these stories were cheer-

ful enough to go to sleep on, and she and Margaret rose to leave the room. I opened the door for them, and shook hands with Mrs. Ravenel, as I am very apt to do when I tell old ladies good-night. To my surprise, Margaret also offered me her hand, and said laughingly, "I think, Mr. Percyfield, that you are very much safer in Europe than you are in America."

I answered in a low voice, "I don't know; I feel myself in great danger."

But Margaret chose not to hear.

England was the last to leave the drawing-room. As she was going out, she said to me rather mischievously, "You know your Shakespeare so well, Mr. Percyfield, that I dare say you remember those lines, 'She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd, and I loved her that she did pity them.'"

"Oh, yes," said I, "I remember them very well, but I never liked them. A man would much rather be loved for himself than for his adventures."

"But don't you believe," said England, "that the adventures go to make the man? I sometimes think that you people, who hold to evolution, deliberately run into adventures for the sake of their reaction, the way you say you take your piano playing. That is what gives you men the greater chance. And it seems to me, Mr. Percyfield, that you have had even more than a man's share."

England is a sympathetic soul, in spite of her crooked politics.

Somehow I found it difficult that evening to settle down to my practicing. But finally I succeeded in doing what I always approve of doing, — I came back into the present moment, and then I played uncommonly well.

CHAPTER X

MARGARET

I COME now to the greatest experience of my whole life.

I have had adventures without number, as any active geologist must. I have been in hold-ups, and in many other tight places. I have been among the moonshiners of the South. I have traveled far and wide, by land and by water. I have had adventures in the mining regions of the West, so terrible that I could not tell them to these gentlewomen at the Château, or indeed bring myself to repeat them under any circumstances, for they seem more like dreadful nightmares than the thing a man is called upon to bear in reality. And, thank God! I have not been a coward. I take no credit for this to myself. It is due entirely to the training my mother and my grandfather Percyfield gave me. It was indeed a part of that perfect good breeding which characterized them both not to be afraid of anything. I have always been profoundly thankful that my family are well-bred, very much more thankful for this than for the accident that we have money. I could get along very well without the money, for if I were put to it, I could always earn enough, and honorably, to

have at least a decent living, but life without the simplicity and high spirit that come with good breeding would seem to me a very arid desert, a gift of more than doubtful value.

I have met good breeding in all classes of society, sometimes among the rich, sometimes among the poor, most frequently among the great middle classes. It is a mistake, though, to suppose that any one class has a monopoly of it, either rich or poor, cultivated or ignorant. Considering their advantages, I think that educated people are more deficient than others. I have known college professors less well-bred by far than even the majority of the people they looked down upon. Good breeding is not a manner, a coat of varnish that a man may put on and off at his pleasure. It is an instinct wrapped up in the very tissues, an instinct with this motto, — "All or nothing." It cannot be denied or put aside, for then it ceases to be. A man may be polite or rude, rude or polite, and can keep up this intermittent fever as long as he lives, though his politeness will have an increasing air of shabbiness about it, and to sensitive people will become in the end his most offensive form of rudeness. But a man cannot be well-bred and ill-bred the same week, or the same month, or the same year even. Good breeding sums up in its instinctive attitude all the efforts a man has made towards perfection, aye, and all that his ancestors have made before him. It is unconscious, the simple acting out of a sound, wholesome nature.

This is why I so much dislike the creed taught by my neighbor, the late Monsieur Jean Calvin. It seems to me essentially ill-bred, a species of salvation in which we have all along a sneaking desire to do the wrong thing, but manage to keep up a semblance of good, either through the grace of God, or the hope of heaven, or the fear of the devil. It is a shop-keeping scheme from first to last. It is the same with all creeds that make sin their central doctrine, for one has to believe all along that if one acted out one's real nature one would be dreadfully wicked, and that it is only by some scheme of redemption worked out by closet theologians who know as much about real, red-blooded, God-given life as does a mummy, — that it is only by some such scheme that one can dodge the enemy, and come out at last on the winning side. This seems to me a very poor view of life, very poor and very irreligious. Happily it is going out of vogue. A saner, sweeter religion is coming to us from the great open of life. We are learning that the central fact of salvation is not sin, but that divine goodness which wells up in some measure in every human heart that beats. The way to be good is to be good, — not to sham goodness. It is a sincere purification of the desires and instincts, that process which makes the good act a necessity, the fruit and flower of a sound seed. This is the religion of Jesus, and it 's a thousand pities that it was ever obscured by these hypocritical, bargaining, shop-keeping schemes of the theologians. It is the teaching of all great teachers. It

is the Pauline doctrine of growing in grace; it is the beautiful Buddhist doctrine of the Path; it is the Socratic doctrine of the philosophic life; it is the very heart and core of the process of evolution.

Good breeding, then, is religion done in terms of everyday life. I do not exaggerate when I say that it is the most important thing of all the many things that are. A man's breeding is the measure of his social evolution. It stamps his greater or less kinship to the gods.

My mother did not formulate her beliefs, but she was as true to the right as is the compass-needle to the pole. She simply would not allow either Charlotte or me to be afraid of anything. And this showed in everything that she did. She was a very daring horsewoman, and rode the most spirited horses. Less well-poised persons called her reckless, but that she never was, for her spirit dominated every horse that ever she rode and made it subject to her will. You may have noticed that affairs have a varying degree of danger according to the spirit with which we meet them. Many of the things my mother did would have been dangerous for less well-bred women, but were perfectly safe for her. She carried out the same principle in her treatment of Charlotte and me, and even of our little friends. One day a lady who lived opposite to us in St. Charles Street, in one of those less tidy places that I have mentioned, rushed over to tell my mother that Peyton and I were playing on the front roof. My mother listened calmly and said in all seri-

ousness, "If it makes you nervous, I will have them play on the back roof."

My mother had me put in the saddle out at Uplands when I was such a little boy that the horse seemed to me an elephant, a mastodon, a very monster in point of size, and I cried out in fear, and was like to have fallen off. But my mother walked along by my side, and chided me gently and lovingly, telling me that little boys *never* cried. Then she rode with me, and gave me something of her own high spirit. I think it was this perfect fearlessness that made such a strong bond of union between my mother and my grandfather Percyfield. I owe it to them that I have not been a coward.

And so I pass on to my great adventure.

Springtime at the Château was so full of immediate happiness that I should have liked it to go on forever. Of course I knew in some corner of the thinking part of me that it could not last always. I knew that some time my enchanted castle would become again a thing of mere wood and stone, the plain Château de Beau-Rivage, as the tax-gatherer has it on his books. I knew that our happy circle must some time be broken. But for the time these facts did not press in upon me. I lived the highest moral life of which a man is capable, for I lived absolutely in the present moment, and made it as sweet and beautiful as possible. The past did not comfort me; the future did not allure me; it was the present that satisfied me. And when a man can say that, he has tasted happiness. I had

given up the tiresome, stupid habit of forever analyzing my own feelings. I no longer kept asking myself whether or not I loved Margaret. I knew that every moment when I was not either working or sleeping I wanted to be with her. I did not try to imagine what my life would be if she were taken out of it. If I had, I should probably have recoiled from it as from an abyss. I took the sweet days just as they came, quite as a child would, save that I was free from a child's fears, and had the man's larger capacity for delight.

It was in the night-time that the revelation came to me. I was wakened by my old shadow friend, the duke of Savoy. He was no longer dressed in the plaid of the huntsman, or the sombre velvet of the statesman. He was attired in what might have been his bridal finery: a gay costume of pink and white satin. He made a very brave figure; and in his eye was such a look of tender happiness that I sprang out of bed, and moved towards him. It seemed as if a magnet were pulling me. But it was a piece of mistaken enthusiasm. It lost me the duke, and brought me in his stead only a patch of moonlight on the clean, scoured floor. It was myself who was standing there in place of the duke. For the sheen of satin I found a tissue of pale moonbeams. But I did not resent the duke's visit, and his having wakened me from a sound slumber. I was conscious of a pleasant excitement. I did not go back to bed, for I was too thoroughly wide awake to think of sleeping. I drew my large steamer shawl around me and sat down by the open window.

I have always been very sensitive to the moonlight. Charlotte says I must never tell that to a stranger, or he might tap his forehead significantly. It was gracious of her to say 'to a stranger.'

The world that spread itself out before my great south window was almost as shadowy as the duke himself. All the daytime features were there, but in the moonlight they were unreal and dream-like. There was no wind, and consequently no movement. It looked like the photograph of a silent, deserted world. The hush was so profound that one could almost hear it. The garden attracted me the most. Being ordinarily so familiar, the deep shadows under the trees and back of the bushes clothed it in additional mystery. It was natural to look for Margaret, for I had drawn the chair to the window for that very purpose. I could see nothing of her. The garden was an untenanted Eden. I called very softly, not choosing my words, but letting them come as they would.

"Margaret, my love; Margaret, my own dear love!"

There was no answer from the garden. Nothing stirred. The moonbeams silvered everything, and there was the silence of the fifth day of creation.

But in my heart there was an answer that came like the onrushing of a mighty flood, musical as a thousand waters, as the music of a thousand tinkling fountains, but impetuous, irresistible, overwhelming. It was the flood of a great knowledge, the knowledge of my love for Margaret, and it enveloped me com-

pletely. I knew then that I loved Margaret, loved her with my whole heart and soul and body. I knelt down at the open window. I felt consecrated, uplifted. The breath of a new life swept over my spirit. I loved Margaret more than I had supposed that one human being could love another. It was no longer the shadow woman that I loved, no longer even the little Margaret with her great brown eyes and chestnut curls and oval face. It was this dear comrade of the present moment, this more than radiant spirit, this superb woman, with firm, earth-planted feet and heart that reached to heaven, this woman who had come so quietly and so gently into my life, and had given it dimensions such as I had never known before. This it was that I loved.

I stretched my hands into the night. From the invisible I would have gathered Margaret and encircled her with my strong arms and drawn her to myself. I did not know that I could love with this devouring passion, this hunger to possess.

I looked out into space. It was a fair universe that lay before me, bathed in the pure colorless moonlight. I thanked the Lord of Creation for this intoxicating gift of life and love. I thanked him that he had made us men and women that we might love something more beautiful and more wonderful than ourselves, and be each to the other a revelation and a delight. When at last I went back to bed, it was a different man, for in my heart was shining the whiteness of a great light.

I could not stay in bed. I felt that I must go to some spot that Margaret had touched.

I got up, and in the moonlight took my cold, refreshing bath. Everything was so white and unreal that I seemed to be bathing a marble statue, but I knew that under the white limbs the blood was running hot and red, and under the marble chest a heart was beating high with hope. I dressed quickly and went down into the garden. I walked between the rows of poplars where Margaret and I had so often walked. I sat on the chairs and benches that I knew she had sat upon. Each familiar spot gave me a sense of comfort, a touch of her presence.

Then I went around the Château along the main building to the north tower where I knew that Margaret slept. Her window was open. It seemed to bring her nearer to me to feel the open window and to fancy that the same sweet air that was caressing her forehead was also touching mine. There is a small iron balcony at her window. I would have given anything that I possess to have had her come for a moment out on the balcony, that I might have seen her alive, moving, breathing, seen her with these new eyes of love. I should not have spoken or stirred a muscle. I should have been content to look.

But I could not make her come. I could only image her there in the white dimity gown that she had worn the night before, and with that content myself as best I could.

Then I went back to the more familiar parts of the

garden, and made my way through the dripping bushes to the duke's summer house. I sat there and watched the coming of the day. First, it was in the blue vault above me, paling the moon and stars. Then it touched the top of the Juras with rosy light, and came gently slipping down the mountain side, waking the sleeping villages and towns, and turning their stonework into walls of jasper. Finally it touched the blue waters of the Lake, and bathed our own beautiful garden in its warm, yellow light, — the new-born day had come. I was deeply moved by this renewal of life on all sides of me, for I had a part in it that I had never had before. In my own heart was the breath of a new life.

I drank morning coffee with the Châtelaine. She was surprised to see me up so early. I told her that I had been watching the birth of a new day.

I knew it was not worth while to wait in the salle à manger in the hope of seeing Margaret, for she always had her breakfast with her mother in their rooms. Ordinarily I should not see Margaret until the luncheon at twelve, unless I had the good fortune to catch a glimpse of her in the garden. It was quite impossible for me to go to work without seeing her, and I did not attempt anything so foolish. I went downstairs and around the Château to the north tower, as I had done in the moonlight. It was so fine a morning that I had hoped Margaret might be on the balcony. But she was not in sight, and so I called up to her, "Good-morning, Margaret, the top

of the morning to *you*." I had always been calling her "Miss Ravenel" before, and the "Margaret" slipped out before I thought, but, for the life of me, I could not be sorry.

I heard her cheery voice, before I saw her, "Good-morning, loiterer, good hunting to you," — this was her way of speeding my work. She was on the balcony for only a moment, and in the white dimity gown looked as sweet and beautiful as the morning itself. "A heavenly day, Mr. Scribe; be sure and put it in your sketches." Then she was gone.

I had to live on that small glimpse of her the whole morning, for she did not go into the garden at all. I watched it closely. I found afterwards that she and the Châtelaine had gone into Geneva on their wheels to attend to some errands for Mrs. Ravenel. I have but one fault to find with my south tower. It commands only the garden. It ought to command the courtyard as well. I cannot say that I did very much work that morning. I did make some attempt at writing, but somehow my pen seemed inclined to form but one word and that was "Margaret." Nor did I think. I could do nothing but sit at the open window, and give myself up to the wonder of my new possession.

We all gathered at luncheon. I could no longer meet Margaret with the old unconsciousness, for my heart was bubbling over in all that I did, and to look at her and not show it was just impossible. So I had to look away, or catch swift stolen glimpses. But my

ears were under no such necessity. They could drink in every word she said, every tone of her voice, and to them it was all very sweet music.

I am sure that Margaret instinctively noticed the difference and guessed the meaning of it. Probably she knew that morning, when I called up to her balcony. It was not a thing that I could hide very well if I had wanted to. There was no need of speech. I had only to wait for some sign that my love had been accepted. All day long it was singing in my heart, like some sky-intoxicated lark, and all night long it nestled on my pillow like some sweet, brooding presence. And yet I wanted to speak. I wanted the joy of taking Margaret's hand in mine and telling her with my lips as well as with my eyes how much I loved her. And I wanted to see in her eyes the sudden gleam of love-light which would tell me that we belonged to each other.

Margaret herself was beautifully simple and natural. She gave no outward sign that she was aware of any difference in the conditions of our comradery. I fancied, however, that she was a little more shy of being alone with me, but even that passed off in a day or two, and she was as frank and unaffected as always. I continued to call her "Margaret," for it would have been quite impossible for me to have said "Miss Ravenel." I felt no rebuke, and in my heart I knew that Margaret loved me.

One morning a few days after, I found Margaret alone in the garden. She would have sent me back

to my tower, but I begged off on the plea that I had just finished one piece of work and really could not begin a new thing until the next day. She was somewhat loath to let me off. I think she foresaw what was coming, and would have put it into the future. It was curious that I could sympathize with Margaret in her shrinking before this great change that was coming into her life and mine, and was yet as powerless to avert it as if I had been the merest onlooker. Something as irresistible as destiny itself seemed to be sweeping us both on into a larger, more complex life. And Margaret, too, recognized the inevitableness of it. Her hesitation was not from lack of love, not from cowardice. It was the hesitation which every earnest soul must feel when it comes to a parting in the road, and stands for one brief moment in the presence of the unknown and untried.

But I was as discreet as a lover can be who really loves. I wanted the day to be perfect, something that Margaret and I could always remember with unalloyed pleasure. Impatient as I was, I would not have startled her by too abrupt speaking. She knew already that I loved her. We walked over the garden together, as we had so often done, under the poplars, through the orchard, down on the quay, but to-day we added a walk that until then we had never taken together, the one along the half-hidden path to the duke's summer house. I doubt not that Margaret had often taken it alone, but I had never been with her. I had saved our coming there together for this

day. It was Margaret and not Miss Ravenel that I meant to take there. Margaret sat down on the marble seat facing the Lake just as I had meant that she should do, and I sat opposite to her. She wondered, she said, why the seat was there, for it seemed to her quite stupid to come to such a lovely spot and then turn one's back to the view. I told her the story of the summer house, the story as I had reconstructed it. I pointed out the dainty Italian workmanship, the partly erased flowers, and the little loves flying in and out among them.

"The lovely Margherita sat there," said I, "just where you are sitting. She could see the beautiful blue sky and the deeper blue of the water, and between them, the lovely brown and yellow and purple tints of the Swiss coast and the Juras. And the duke sat here, just where I am sitting, a little to one side so as not to interfere with the view, but still very near to the duchess."

"And why are you so unkind to him as to make him out less a lover of Nature than was the lady?" asked Margaret, curiously, for as yet she did not guess the end of my story.

"It was not that," said I, "for he was passionately fond of Nature. This dear old garden proves it. But it seems that he loved the Lady Margherita even more. He had this seat constructed, so that while the lady looked towards heaven, he could find it in her eyes."

"It is a pretty fancy, Mr. Percyfield," said Mar-

garet, gently, letting her eyes rest on the strongly lighted mountains.

"You used to call me 'John,' once, Margaret."

"It is a pretty fancy, then, John," she said, and the plain old name sounded very sweet from her lips, even the little hesitation that came from the newness of it. "How do you come to know so much about this gallant old duke?"

"It was the insight of a lover, dear Margaret," I answered; "I had hoped that sometime you might be sitting just where you are now, and that I might be opposite to you, just here. And I had hoped, dear Margaret, when I came to tell you of my love that I might find something better in your eyes than any view. I wanted to see the light of an answering love. Dear Margaret, dear heart, I love you with all the passion of my life. Will you take my love and keep it? Will you be my dear wife? Will you let me be your lover, your husband?" I was no longer sitting. I had taken Margaret's hand. I was seeking my answer in those clear brown eyes.

Margaret did not draw her hand away. She looked frankly and fearlessly into my own eager eyes. I found the priceless light that I wanted to find. I knew now beyond any peradventure that we two belonged to each other. It was some moments before Margaret spoke. Her voice was low, but as clear and vibrating as if she had been an angel bidding me, all unworthy as I was, to enter into paradise. I may not write down what Margaret said, for when a woman confesses

her love to a man, it is something too sacred to be heard by any one else. But after that I did not sit opposite to her, but on the bench by her side, and the first morning of our new life together slipped into the past. The old garden was another Eden, and I stood face to face with a new creation, the marvel of a woman's love.

I know what a man's love is, an overwhelming torrent that sweeps everything else before it and obscures the whole face of creation.

But I had yet to learn the force of a woman's love; its tenderness, its devotion, the sweet yielding of itself. And the marvel of it often hushed me into silence.

It is so natural to love Margaret that it seems to me a thing that could not be helped. As I look at her and feast my hungry eyes on her dear face, I feel that my love is as inevitable as destiny itself. But I marveled that Margaret should love me. I have read in the old mythology books in the library at Uplands how the goddesses in Olympus sometimes loved a mortal man, and it seemed to me that the fable was repeating itself. Margaret is everything a woman should be, beautiful, accomplished, high-spirited, the soul of goodness and truth. And I? As you know, I am only a homely fellow with accomplishments so slender that it would be pitiful to name them. I have taste, but, as Charlotte rightly says, no talent. I have nothing to commend me, nothing save my great love and my earnestness, yes, and thank God, an honorable, unspotted name.

When I spoke to Margaret about these things, she took my hand in hers and said gravely, "Dear John, I do not know whence love comes, and I do not question it any more than I question the sunlight. But this I know, that in my heart I have loved you ever since we were children. In our play even, it came out. If you were Ivanhoe, I wanted to be Rowena, and though I was willful sometimes and teased and said I 'd never marry you, I knew all along I could never marry any one else." — "And you see I never did," she added triumphantly. Then after a moment, she said, "A woman's love is instinctive, and can give no account of itself. I think it is the soul that a woman loves. That must be strong and brave and pure. Do you know the name I gave you, when I began first to think about you very much some years ago. It was this," — she leaned over and whispered it to me, — "and by that name, I knew that I should always love you."

It has not made me think more highly of myself than I ought, to have Margaret love me so much. It is no merit of mine, but the marvel of love itself. But this it has done for me, it has made me less and less conscious of myself and my shortcomings, and it has carried me into a broader, truer life. If at times I should ever grow a little weary and discouraged, as they say the bravest of us will when we try to live the life, I shall think of that high name by which I am known to Margaret alone, and I shall take heart again.

There was no reason why all the world should not know the joy of our love, and so that very day at luncheon, with Margaret's and Mrs. Ravenel's permission, I announced the formal betrothal of Miss Margaret Ravenel, of New Orleans, and Mr. John Percyfield, of Philadelphia.

I was much touched by the sweet kindness with which the announcement was received. No one was in the least surprised, and so I suppose I had been less skillful in concealing my feelings than I thought I had been. The Châtelaine had the vin ordinaire replaced by some choice old Spanish wine, and they all drank to Margaret's health and mine. The Châtelaine was as full of happiness as if we had been her own children. How I loved the dear little old lady. Her glistening eyes and motherly smile were constantly on either Margaret or me. England and Ireland, too, were beautiful in their interest and sympathy. The busy world sometimes forgets that we need sympathy in our happiness as well as in our sorrow. These three women, no longer young themselves, save in their feelings, will ever have a warm spot in my affections, for I shall remember that at a time of great joy they entered into it with me.

Scotland alone was crotchety. She said not a word of congratulation, and before any of us knew it, had slipped out of the room altogether. I concluded that something had gone amiss between her and her bare-legged laird, and that perhaps it pained her to see Margaret and me so happy.

But my greatest surprise was dear Mrs. Ravenel. I felt guilty at the thought of asking her for Margaret. The Yankees had robbed Mrs. Ravenel of husband and father, and, now in her old age, it seemed almost cruel for another Yankee to come along and ask her for all she had left, — her daughter. I should not have blamed Mrs. Ravenel had she refused me outright. I had made up my mind that I would wait for Margaret as long as need be and that I would be as considerate as possible to this gentle old lady whom time had so strangely mellowed and whom I loved for her own sake as well as for Margaret's. I went to Mrs. Ravenel timidly, for I felt that I was asking so much. But I found again the depths of a mother's love. Mrs. Ravenel's own married life had been very brief, — Margaret had never seen her father, — but it had been singularly happy, and she wished the same happiness for Margaret. Mrs. Ravenel told me sweetly that she should not feel that she was losing a daughter, but rather that she was gaining a son. I promised myself as well as her that that was what Margaret's marriage should mean. After luncheon, when Margaret was not present, Mrs. Ravenel told me how uncertain she felt the tenure of her own life to be, and how deeply happy she was to feel that Margaret had a strong heart to lean upon in the hour of sorrow that was so soon coming. I felt now that I could not give Mrs. Ravenel up. I tried to persuade her that she was stronger, and that we should be keeping her with us for many long years to come. But Mrs. Ravenel

shook her head sadly and told me that already she felt the near presence of the death angel. She begged me, however, not to say anything to Margaret, for she wanted her present happiness to be as complete as possible. It was the easier to do this as I persuaded myself that Mrs. Ravenel was mistaken.

Aunt Viney's delight was unbounded. She had always been very fond of me. I think I stood next to Margaret in the old woman's heart, as Margaret did to Mrs. Ravenel. But Aunt Viney was even more obstinate than the rest of the Château in declining to be the least bit surprised. She laid claim to very ancient knowledge of this modern affair of the heart. "Go 'long, honey," she said to me, "I knowed it when you and Mis' Marg'ret was both of you chillens. I done tole Pompey that Mis' Marg'ret and Marsa John 'ud be a-gittin' married some o' these days."

In my happiness I did not forget Charlotte. Margaret and I each wrote her a long letter, and sent them off in the same envelope. But it seemed a slow way of forwarding good news. It would take almost two weeks for Charlotte to know, so in the twilight Margaret and I walked up to the village, and I sent a cablegram to Charlotte. On the way Margaret and I amused ourselves composing possible messages, but all along I knew very well what I should say. We kept up the fun during the whole walk. It takes very little to make lovers happy. All I needed was to have Margaret with me. When we got to the telegraph office, I surprised her by writing, — "Margaret is the determi-

nate good," and that is the message I sent to Charlotte. I knew that she would understand. But I had to explain the message to Margaret, and after it had been sent off under the sea to the dear Charlotte, Margaret slipped her arm through mine, and said softly, "And together, John, we will seek the indeterminate good, you and I." In the darkness I stooped over and kissed her lightly on the forehead. It was a kiss that had been waiting for a dozen long years.

It was now late in June. The fruit trees had lost their riotous bloom, and in its stead the fruit was taking form. The shrubbery was heavy with its fresh green foliage. The summer flowers had followed those of spring. The long brilliant days and the warm genial nights made life a veritable holiday. At the Château, the days came and went much as they did before, save that for Margaret and me they had an added richness. Indeed we tried to keep the days much as they had been. In our own deep happiness, we wanted not to be selfish, and be forever slipping away from the others for the delightful little interviews that were so dear to us. In fact I saw a little less of Margaret than formerly, for by common consent, and without any word's being spoken, we drew Mrs. Ravenel more and more into our plans, spending long afternoons sitting with her in the garden, talking or reading aloud or idly breathing in the bounty of summer warmth and color. When occasionally Margaret and I went off on our wheels, we carried the Châtelaine with us as often as she could be persuaded

to go. It would be very hard on the Châtelaine when the Ravenels left, and I wanted her to see just as much of Margaret as possible.

For myself it seemed to me that every day I loved Margaret the more, she was so good not only to me but to every one else.

Mrs. Ravenel and Margaret had arranged to sail for America the latter part of July. The Beauregards had a cottage at York Harbor, and the Ravenels were promised to them for August. As soon as it got cool enough in the fall, Mrs. Ravenel and Margaret intended to go back to Arlington. So it became necessary as well as pleasant for us to be thinking of the future. My own plans had been equally definite. I was to go to England in July and spend a couple of months among the social workers in London. I meant to make Mansfield House my headquarters. I had expected to be back in Philadelphia the latter part of September. But now I was eager to change all these plans. If I could have had my own way, I should have married Margaret then and there. I could imagine no more delightful spot for a wedding than our beautiful old Château, and no more acceptable time than the immediate present. But for once at least my habit of theorizing was a real help, and gave me a patience which I might otherwise not have had. I had always thought that a wedding ought to be arranged absolutely to suit the bride, that in every detail it ought to be as she would like to have it, the one most perfect day of her life. It would have been unpardonable selfishness

on my part to intrude a single wish, for to have my supreme wish gratified, to have Margaret my dear wife forever, made every other wish seem unimportant. Consequently there was little change in our proposed plans. It was arranged that I should go with Margaret and Mrs. Ravenel to England the middle of July and see them safely off on their steamer. Then, with such grace as I could command, I was to settle down to my social studies at Mansfield House, and sail a couple of months later, just as I had expected to do. The wedding was to be early in October at Arlington. Since I might not be married at the Château, there was no spot in all the world more welcome than our dear old Arlington.

Margaret and I talked over the guests. There were two that I should sadly miss, my mother and my grandfather Percyfield, but I knew they would be there in memory, a very real presence. There would be Charlotte and Frederic and the small boy and my aunt Percyfield, and a whole carload of other Percyfields and Marstons. Margaret quite agreed with me that it would be wise just to charter a Pullman and have it run through to New Orleans. Then from New Orleans itself there would be Ravenels and Lees and Masons and Beaumonts, cousins to the fifth and sixth generation, and no end of intimate friends. It is well that Arlington is fairly large, and that the drawing-room and dining-room open with wide folding doors into the hall. I counted on Peyton as best man, Margaret was sure that I might, and I knew the mu-

sician would want to play for us with his own hands. Each detail of this wedding was very precious, and I had to speak of it often to keep me in heart for the long separation of the summer. Margaret humored me in this, and took a sweet delight in it herself. It never occurred to me that the separation would be hard for her. You must not think that this was very selfish. It was only that I still found it an impossible thought that Margaret *could* love me as much as I loved her. Even when I called up her secret name for me, and experienced each day her tender, unselfish love, it seemed preposterous that life for her could centre so completely in me, as for me it did in her. It was no lack of faith in Margaret. It was only that I was but slowly laying hold of this great marvel of a woman's love.

So we came apparently to our last days at the Château, — full, ripe days of perfect peace and happiness. It had meant from the first a great deal to me to live under the same roof with Margaret, and day by day to enjoy our simple comradeship. And when I came to love her, it meant infinitely more. It was a sweet prelude to the holier intimacy of marriage. It seemed to me that we were day by day adjusting our lives to each other, and preparing ourselves half consciously and all devoutly for the high festival of our love. As I came more and more to know what love meant, and the wonder of it, I felt a certain awe of Margaret. She became for me something very sacred. I had the lover's instinct to want to be near her and to touch

her. I would fain have stretched out my strong arms and encircled her and drawn her to myself, and yet I could not have touched so much as the hem of her garment without her consent. If she but half withdrew her hand from mine, I must needs let it go, though I would have kept it there forever.

I had supposed that one could love and not be loved, but it seems that one cannot. It is only the prelude. Love itself comes when there are two loving, and then only is it in full measure and perfect. And in those quiet days, when we began to speak of the future, and of our plans when we should come again to America, my fancy saw the home that I had planned, now doubly dear since Margaret was to be at the head of it.

Very tenderly and very reverently I thought of the children who might be born to us as the sign and symbol of our love, and already I was wishing that they might resemble Margaret in everything, and me only in the great love I bore her. And when I thought that there might, perhaps, be a little Margaret like the child that I had loved, and perhaps a little son whom we might call Jack, it seemed to me that my life had indeed become a beautiful fairy tale that had suddenly been made true.

I would have celebrated this coming of the determinate good by the idlest loitering, by anything that would have kept me near Margaret. But she would not have it so. She bade me go on with my work and do better than my best if I really wanted to please

her. And she herself was even more devoted to Mrs. Ravenel than formerly. We read a great deal those long summer afternoons, for Mrs. Ravenel was able to drive only very short distances, and to walk hardly at all. I remember that we read aloud Max Müller's *Deutsche Liebe*. Margaret liked it much, for she said it was pure sentiment without the least touch of sentimentality. And she liked what my grandfather Percyfield had written about strength and gentleness on the fly-leaf of my copy. Margaret bade me, if ever I wrote a novel or a love story, to make it like Müller's, and to let it be about love as I discovered it and experienced it, and not any shabby, second-hand picture of what I thought it might be, or could be, or ought to be. But I only laughed and told her that it was much better to live a love story than to write one. I said I wanted our love story not to be memories, but an ever present reality. Margaret was standing by my chair as I spoke. She stooped over and kissed me shyly on the forehead. It was the first time that she had ever kissed me since we were children together. I caught her hand in mine, and looked up into her illumined face. I knew that come what would, come what could, this love of ours was a reality and eternal.

CHAPTER XI

THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

We had reached our last week at the Château. We began to feel the coming separation. We began to feel, too, what it would mean to leave our enchanted castle and the kind Châtelaine. Our material preparations were easily made. Aunt Viney always packed for Margaret and Mrs. Ravenel, and my own packing as a matter of principle is invariably left until the very last evening, so that the spirit of unrest may not claim me for its own one moment sooner than is necessary. But we found it harder to make the more subtle preparations, to say good-by to all our favorite haunts, and to get ourselves mentally ready to go. Margaret and I had many spots to visit. We had to go once more with the Châtelaine to Yvoire the beautiful, and drink afternoon tea with Madame Thonon. We had to climb to La Capite, and exult for the last time over the marvelous beauty of Mont Blanc at sunset. Then we had to have a long row on the Lake, and go once more for some final music with Mademoiselle Werner. And there were nearer haunts to be lingered over, the dormer window in the north tower, the duke's summer house, every path and

corner of our old garden. It was a slow process, saying good-by.

Mrs. Ravenel had seemed stronger than usual, for the prospect of going back to America was evidently as grateful to her as it was to Aunt Viney. The excitement produced a show of health which deceived all of us.

It had been raining that evening. There was a constant downpour, and the monotonous dripping of water as it fell from the eaves into the little puddles on the ground. But in the drawing-room it was bright and cheery, and we had a particularly jolly time. Mrs. Ravenel was with us. The United Kingdom was at its best. The Châtelaine was full of Swiss stories and anecdotes. Margaret sang and played for us. Altogether it was one of those evenings that you like to remember. You cannot arrange for them. They just come of themselves, born of a lot of happy circumstances that you cannot quite foresee.

It was about eleven o'clock when we separated for the night. I stopped in the drawing-room and practiced until midnight. Then I went upstairs to bed, and directly to sleep. I must have slept for an hour or more when I was wakened by a knock at my door. I am the only one who sleeps in the south tower, and I thought at first that I must have made a mistake. But the knock was repeated, louder than before. I jumped out of bed and opened the door. It was Aunt Viney. Her face was almost pale, and the distressed look in her eyes told me that something

serious was the matter. My heart almost stood still when I thought that perhaps Margaret was ill. "For God's sake, Aunt Viney, what is the matter?" I cried.

Aunt Viney was so grief-smitten that she could only speak slowly, "Oh, Marsa John, Mis' Lucy 's done took dreffu1 ill, and Mis' Marg'ret she says will yo' please come to her soon as yo' can."

I charged the poor old woman to call the Châtelaine, and then I lighted my candle and dressed as quickly as I could. I remembered what Mrs. Ravenel had told me, and instinctively I felt that it was the death angel. I hurried over to the north tower, my heart overfull with sorrow, for I knew only too well what dreadful grief was in store for Margaret and for faithful Aunt Viney.

When I reached Mrs. Ravenel's room, I found Margaret and Aunt Viney and the Châtelaine gathered around the bedside. The room was lighted by a single candle, which threw a feeble, flickering light over the grief-stricken group. I would fain have believed for a moment that the scene was unreal, a dreadful dream that would pass if I could only rouse myself. But the pressure of Margaret's hand and the sight of her white, pitiful face drove this last hope out of me. I knew that I stood in the near presence of death.

Happily Mrs. Ravenel herself was not suffering. Could we but have known it, she had been slowly dying for many weeks past, and so gently was her

spirit disentangling itself from the spent body that there was none of that fierce struggle for life that is seen when a strong man meets his death. On the contrary, it was but the completion of a process that Mrs. Ravenel herself had clearly foreseen. Now that the supreme moment had come, it was a moment of triumph rather than defeat. A sweet peace seemed to envelop Mrs. Ravenel, and even to touch the white faces at her bedside.

Death is an august thing, and in its presence a noble soul may not think of the self, but only of that other soul which is meeting this tremendous experience. It was so with Margaret and even with Aunt Viney. They were beyond the point of tears, and were in that calm which is the breath of the tomb itself. The Châtelaine was quietly weeping.

Mrs. Ravenel opened her eyes. There was in them the joy of one who comes into her own again, that last intense spark which greets us before the spirit is gone. With much effort, Mrs. Ravenel sought out each face, Margaret's, Aunt Viney's, the Châtelaine's, mine, lingering on each, but longest on Margaret's and mine. Mrs. Ravenel could not speak to us, but I understood the look of perfect satisfaction that came into her face. She was going to the husband of her youth, to the festival of renewed love, and she was glad to leave Margaret with me. Then the fire went out of her eyes, the spark was spent, and we knelt in the presence of the dead.

When Margaret realized that it was indeed death,

she buried her face in her hands, and Aunt Viney no longer restrained her sobs.

The Châtelaine had ceased weeping, and her eyes were very bright. "Look," she whispered eagerly to me, and there in the uncertain light of this chamber of present death I saw a faint gray cloud detach itself from the quiet body, like a symbol of the spirit that was passing, and ascend into the void space above us. I dared not speak to Margaret, for had she failed to see it, it would have been a cruel interruption, probably a cruel disappointment. It was a pale silver cloud, in substance like the luminous aureole that I had once seen about my own body, and of which I have already made mention. Had it not been for the Châtelaine, I should have counted it an illusion born of my own mental habit of imaging events. As it is, I think always of Mrs. Ravenel as I saw her in that brief moment, a gracious figure untouched by age or grief; and I can think of her no longer as the feeble gentlewoman who came to our dear Château de Beau-Rivage to exchange old age for youth, and to pass before us into the undiscovered country.

After a time, Margaret yielded to my earnest entreaty, and went with me into the drawing-room, while I begged the Châtelaine to care for Aunt Viney. I was fearful that in the first frenzy of her grief the old woman might destroy herself. To her, "Mis' Lucy" was the world. They had been children together in the old slave days, and Viney had belonged

to her little mistress in soul and heart as well as body. The emancipation proclamation had never reached her. She had accepted what she needed in the way of food and clothing, but never any other wage. It had been a service of love for a whole lifetime. Now it was ended, and the grief-smitten old woman stood alone, in many ways the most bereaved of all of us. I had great influence with Aunt Viney, both because of her love and her belief in my supernatural powers. I knew that I could bring her thought to Margaret and me, somewhat later, but now my whole thought was with Margaret. I said a few hurried words of caution to the Châtelaine in French, and I knew that I could depend upon her in any emergency.

I made up a fire in the drawing-room, for the night had that shuddering chill upon it which is noticeable even in summer just before the dawn. Then I lighted several lamps and carefully shaded them, so that the room itself might help me in my ministrations to Margaret. I made her sit down before the fire in the high-backed chair that England usually occupied. I saw that Mrs. Ravenel's chair was pushed back into a corner. I drew my own chair up to Margaret's, and there we sat the rest of that dreadful night, her hand in mine, and both of us still in the presence of the dead. We said very little, for it was too soon to offer any word of comfort. I could only concentrate my presence on Margaret, and make her feel the warm, human love which wrapped her about, as with a garment, and shared her sorrow to the full. In these

supreme moments of life, one does not wish to talk. It is the spirit and the silence that speak.

Margaret and I sat there before the fire until the day was fully come, and the warm summer sun had quite put out the feeble light of our shaded lamps. We neither of us had any sense of the passing time. At last I was aroused by a gentle knock on the door. It was England. She came over to us and laid her hand caressingly on Margaret's hair. "My poor children" — she said. Then her voice choked, and she could say no more. But she had spoken, and we both understood; we felt the comfort of her presence. After a time, England took Margaret away with her and put her to bed.

I went upstairs and dressed. It was a source of unspeakable comfort to me that Mrs. Ravenel had felt as she did towards me, and that in all of the sad duties that would soon be pressing I had the right to act as her son. I had scarcely finished dressing when Marie came to the door with a card. It was Mademoiselle Werner. I hastened down to the drawing-room, much touched by the prompt kindness of this unusual friend. If, however, I had not understood Mademoiselle Werner as well as I did, I should have been shocked by her appearance. It was as if a brightly colored butterfly had come into a tomb. Mademoiselle Werner was dressed in one of her very gay summer costumes, and her fresh, childlike face was as radiant as if she had come to a wedding. At first I thought that she could not know of Mrs. Ravenel's death. I suppose

my face must have expressed as much, for Mademoiselle Werner hastened to undeceive me: "Yes, my friend," she said, taking my hand in hers, "I know all. I came to you as soon as I could. It is at first a very great shock, is it not? But, Monsieur, you must have known, for it is a thing that has been coming towards you for many weeks. You must have felt it and known it. When it fell upon you last night, it was terrible for Mademoiselle Margaret. I remember how I felt when my own dear mother died," — the tears filled her eyes, but the radiant smile did not waver for an instant, — "but when one is happy to go, we would not wish to detain them. We wish for our friends their heart's desire, do we not? Yes, I knew that you would say so. Ought we to hesitate, then, Monsieur, even at the grave? No, we must not be guilty of this great selfishness. You know with me, do you not, that Madame has found her heart's desire? Can you and the young girl not believe this, and calm your grief? May I speak to Mademoiselle Margaret? May I tell her that it is so very well with Madame, her mother?"

I hardly knew what to answer. I was not sure that Margaret would understand. I said that I would see. I went directly to the Châtelaine to ask her advice. She thought it would be all right, and came herself to take Mademoiselle Werner to Margaret.

I waited impatiently in the drawing-room, so anxious that Margaret should have every possible consolation, and yet so fearful that Mademoiselle Werner's visit might be a mistake. More than an hour passed.

When at last, Mademoiselle Werner rejoined me, I saw at once by the exaltation in her face that she felt her visit to have been successful. She sat down by the window that looks out on the Lake, and for a time she seemed to forget my presence, she was so absorbed in thought. When at last she turned to me, her whole manner had completely changed. There was a look of great weariness in her face. She looked curiously like a tired child. She wished to speak to me, she said, about the funeral. And now I was to meet as great a surprise as any that I had experienced with this strange being, this Fantasy Child, as she so rightly called herself. She spoke to me about the practical details of the funeral with a wisdom and a commonsense that a strong man, quite unacquainted with Mrs. Ravenel and untouched by any emotion, might perhaps have shown. I listened incredulously, but with increasing attention, for the arrangements she proposed were far beyond anything I could have planned myself. Even as I listened, I could not help seeing that Mademoiselle Werner's plans owed their splendid mastery to an idea, and could never have been devised by a simply practical person. The idea underlying everything was to spare Margaret.

That it had cost Mademoiselle Werner very dear to live all this out in her imagination showed itself in her face. I felt more deeply grateful to her for this than even for the strange help that she had tried to give me in the matter of the music. I must not dwell on all these sad details, but simple gratitude to Made-

moiselle Werner compels me to make some record of them.

Mademoiselle Werner wished that the thought of death might remain with Margaret the shortest possible time. She wished to separate the idea from the Château, and from Margaret's life at once, and to fix Margaret's thought upon the living mother, first in the past and then under what Mademoiselle Werner conceived to be the far happier and more glorious conditions of the present. For Mademoiselle Werner has so absolute a faith in immortality that one cannot be with her for any length of time without in some measure sharing it. I had come to this same belief by a different path and needed no conversion. But I had not the wit to act upon my belief in the splendid way that Mademoiselle Werner acted upon hers. I had thought to have a simple funeral service at the Château, and then to proceed to the Protestant burial ground at the village. But Mademoiselle Werner showed me at once that this would be to fix the idea of death in connection with the Château, while what we wanted was to make Margaret remember only the happy days that Mrs. Ravenel had spent here. Mademoiselle Werner's plan was to have the service and burial at the beautiful little cemetery at Clarens, the one looking out towards the Dent du Midi and the solemn snow-covered Alps, the one where Amiel sleeps. Margaret had never been there. It would be a strange, sudden experience, quite unconnected with her daily life, and less likely to intrude into her gentler mem-

ories. I owed the suggestion to Mademoiselle Werner also that we should go by boat directly from the Château to the cemetery. I did not consult Margaret about any of the details. I simply asked her if she would be willing to leave everything to me, and let me do what seemed for the best, and she said that she was quite willing. So I left her most of the time, as indeed I had to, to England and the Châtelaine.

It was a strange little cortège that swept up our beautiful Léman from the Château de Beau-Rivage to the sacred ground at Clarens. Besides Margaret and Aunt Viney and myself, there were only the United Kingdom, the Châtelaine, Mademoiselle Werner, and our good neighbors, Monsieur and Madame du Chêne. To make the journey as short as possible, I had secured, through Monsieur du Chêne's great kindness, the loan of one of the fastest steam yachts registered in the club at Geneva. When we went on board, the coffin was already in position under the awning on the rear deck. It had been placed there unknown to Margaret, while we were making a pretense of breakfast in the salle à manger. Mademoiselle Werner would have no flowers. She wished to save them from any association with the grave. A coffin is a terrible thing. It would have been insupportable to sit there on the deck, staring at it during the whole of our sad voyage. Mademoiselle Werner had provided against that. The coffin was buried under the voluminous folds of a great American flag. Margaret

started perceptibly when she saw it. I knew what she was thinking about. It seemed for the moment an odd destiny that this gentlewoman, who had sacrificed everything for the flag of the Confederacy, should now be going to her grave wrapped in the Stars and Stripes, and that one of her chief mourners should be a Yankee lad whom she had once mistrusted and disliked. But I would not have changed it if I could. It seemed to symbolize that now all the mistakes of the past had been blotted out once for all, and that this gentle friend, whom I sincerely mourned for her own sake as well as for Margaret's, had died as completely reconciled to the manifest destiny of Louisiana, as she had been reconciled to me. I pressed Margaret's hand and the answering pressure told me that it was all right.

The awnings on the yacht hung low, so that we could see little but the sparkling blue water as it rushed past us. Mademoiselle Werner, with a singleness of purpose such as I have never experienced before, had arranged Margaret's chair on the outer side of the boat so that she might not see the Château. The awnings hid the Juras.

Aunt Viney sat on one side of Margaret, and I on the other. Aunt Viney behaved remarkably well. In some ways the tragedy was deepest for her. Her devotion to Mrs. Ravenel antedated even Margaret's by more than a score of years, and it had been absolutely single-hearted. Nor had Aunt Viney our compensations. I had talked with her several times

and tried to make her see that "Mis' Lucy" would be best pleased if she controlled herself and did all she could for Miss Margaret. I told her, too, what I had seen at the bedside of the dying woman, and how very sure I was that now Miss Lucy was entirely happy and was with Marsa LeRoy and old Marsa Lee. It was touching to see Aunt Viney's utter confidence in all that I said, and the heroic fidelity with which she tried to think always of Margaret and never of herself.

Presently the silence of our journey was broken by Mademoiselle Werner's voice. She was singing. It was not a dirge, a requiem, but something soft and sweet and human, with a strange undercurrent of triumph in it. To Mademoiselle Werner, death was a species of triumph, and I knew in my heart that she envied the dead woman for whose sake we were making this strange, solemn voyage. It was impossible for Margaret to restrain her tears, and in truth I was glad to have them flow, for her calm frightened me more than any expression of grief.

At Clarens, there was another nicety of arrangement, for which I had to thank the dear Châtelaine. We got at once into the waiting carriages, before the flag was touched. Then we were driven by a somewhat roundabout way to the cemetery itself. When we got there, the coffin was already in the grave, and the great flag concealed it. The clergyman from the neighboring church at Montreux read the Anglican service for the dead, — beautiful and solemn in its reverence and in its assurance of immortality. It is a

supreme moment, standing for the last time in the visible presence of the dead. But every influence of comfort and peace had been brought to bear upon us, and it had not been without effect. When the clergyman dropped the handful of earth into the open grave, as is required by his office, it fell silently upon the thick folds of the flag, and Margaret was spared the cruelest sound in all of our too cruel burial customs, the sound of earth falling on the coffin of some one you love, a thud that strikes against the very portals of the heart, and in the still watches of the night strikes and strikes again until it seems as if you must go crazy. Then Mademoiselle Werner sang once more, not something from the Hymnal, but an old Gregorian chant which she knew Margaret would not be likely ever to hear again.

The kind Monsieur du Chêne remained at the grave and afterwards he attended to having a suitable stone erected for me. You will find it at the third turning after you pass the grave of Amiel. It is a simple white stone, "In Loving Memory of Lucy, daughter of General Archibald Lee, and wife of Lieutenant LeRoy Ravenel, of New Orleans." The two lines that follow were written by Margaret.

We drove quickly to the railroad station. The yacht meanwhile had disappeared. It would have been too cruel to have gone back to the Château on board of her, with that dreadful empty space under the awning on the rear deck, a space into which we could not penetrate and from which we could not withdraw our

thoughts. Nor would it have been consistent with Mademoiselle Werner's plan. It was easy to secure a couple of compartments for the ride to Geneva, and from there we drove out to the Château.

How wonderfully kind the world is at all times, and especially when one is in sorrow! The gentlewomen at the Château had endeared themselves to me in a thousand ways before this, but now they seemed more like kinswomen than friends of only a year's standing. In all things they were so good to Margaret. They helped me to make her feel that the world was still full of warm, human love and sympathy; and by the sweet, natural way in which they spoke of Mrs. Ravenel they strengthened Mademoiselle Werner and me in our effort to have Margaret think of her mother as one who had gone into another country, but who had not for a moment ceased to be.

The two weeks following Mrs. Ravenel's funeral were dreadfully, pitiably sad. I trembled for Margaret's health. For a time, the intensity of her grief admitted of no comfort. Margaret did not want to grieve me, and she was touchingly grateful for all that was done for her, but the very strength of her nature made the sense of loss overwhelming. I knew that she was not weakly giving way to her grief. I could see that she was making a brave fight against it. But my heart ached me sore to see her suffer so. I had to keep telling myself that in the end she must win through.

It was a trifle over two weeks later that Aunt Viney came to my door early one morning while I was still

dressing to say that Miss Margaret would breakfast with me in the salle à manger and to ask what hour it should be. After Mrs. Ravenel's death, the Châtelaine had taken Margaret to her own apartments and always had her breakfast served there. I was rejoiced to have this word from Margaret, for I knew what it meant. It meant that Margaret had returned to life again. I sent word to come when she would, and she should find me gladly awaiting her there. I hastily finished dressing, putting aside the black tie that I had intended to wear, and substituting a more cheerful one. I went downstairs with a light heart. I did not have to wait long for Margaret. As soon as she opened the door, my heart leaped for joy, for I saw that a great change had taken place in my dear lady. She wore one of those simple white gowns that I call dimity, and better still she wore her old glad smile again. I went to meet her with outstretched hands. She took them both in hers. Then she dropped them, and put her arms around me and kissed me. "John," she whispered, "I have been very selfish. Mother" — her voice trembled, but she went on bravely, — "mother would not like me to have given way as I have done. But I am myself now."

My brave Margaret! she had not been in the least selfish. You may be sure that I denied it. She had simply been overwhelmed with grief, the first deep grief of her life, and as I held her there in my arms, I prayed God that it might be the only one.

To have Margaret with me, and in this happier

frame of mind, made me so boyishly light-hearted that I had to restrain myself, lest I wound her with my too high spirits. But the change in Margaret was very deep. Often there was a pitiful tremble to her lips, or the sudden filling of her eyes with tears, but she put them resolutely away and was her brave sweet self again. Nor would Margaret let me avoid the mention of her mother. Margaret seemed to like to speak of her, and it was better so. To forget our dead, or to put them into the oblivion of silence is to smother grief, not to conquer it. The only way we can conquer grief is to accept it, face it, live with it, and then with the help of that love which makes our grief, but is deeper than any grief, we shall in the end win through. I have not tried to make Margaret think that this sorrow can ever pass completely out of her life, for I know too well that such may not be. But I know that if nobly borne, as I am sure that she will bear it, the bitterness, the poison of it, will be sucked out by time, and her love will always be greater than her sorrow.

After breakfast we went into the garden. Margaret asked me how I had been spending my mornings, and she asked very particularly about my work. I had to answer that I had been working as usual, but that it had not amounted to much, for I had been thinking all the time of her. Margaret said that this must not be so any more. Then she spoke of my stay in London and her desire that I should be carrying out my plans. I, too, had been thinking about this, but more because I knew that, sooner or later, Margaret

would ask about the matter, and I had determined, plans or no plans, that at such a moment I would not leave her. I had rather vague ideas about how we might satisfy the proprieties, but I tried to keep them in mind, for Mrs. Ravenel and indeed all of Margaret's people were very conventional, and I would not for the world have done anything contrary to what Mrs. Ravenel would have wished, or anything that would distress the New Orleans relatives. But all the same, I meant to stay with Margaret, to cross the ocean with her, to go with her to New Orleans, to marry her, and never to leave her until the summons came from that higher power to which in the end we must intrust all things. I thought in a nebulous sort of way that perhaps the Châtelaine would go with us to America and would care for Margaret, though I knew the plan was too selfish ever to meet Margaret's approval.

But Margaret also had been thinking. She had foreseen this opposition of mine and had brave plans for sending me off to London, and going home herself somewhat later with Aunt Viney, by way of Genoa and the Mediterranean service. But I think that Margaret was relieved that she did not have to carry these brave plans out, for you may be quite sure that I would never consent to any such arrangement. It was not a time for separation. If ever Margaret needed me in her life she needed me now, and I meant to serve her, come what would.

When Margaret had satisfied all her scruples by

finding every other plan quite impossible, she said to me as shyly as if she had been a princess, and compelled by reasons of court etiquette to ask some smaller dignitary to marry her, "Then, John, I will go to London with you as your wife. We will be married here at the Château."

I put my arms around Margaret and pressed her warm cheek to mine. "Dear Margaret," I cried, "dear wife;" and afterwards it seemed to me that this had been our true wedding service, the plighting of our troth before God.

I had thought of this plan, but it had seemed ungenerous for me to propose it after Margaret herself had once rejected it. But to have Margaret propose it herself cleared away all difficulties at once, and made me very, very happy. So anxious was Margaret to be entirely unselfish in all her plans and to help on my work in every way in her power that she would have married me in two or three days had I but said the word. If I had consulted my own inclinations I would have had the wedding that afternoon, so that I might have the right to stay with Margaret always and comfort her with my ever-present love. But I put off the wedding for a full fortnight, naming a date somewhat more than a month after Mrs. Ravenel's death. It seemed to me that in this new attitude of mind the quiet life at the Château would do more to restore Margaret than would any other possible plan. Thanks to Mademoiselle Werner's great tact and goodness, the associations here had been made as little painful

as could be. Then, too, a wedding day had always seemed to me an occasion of the first moment, the consummation of the deepest experience that can come into the life of a true man or woman, and I wanted Margaret to meet her wedding day with the largest measure of gladness that the circumstances made possible.

The arrangements for our very quiet and unexpected wedding were too simple to require much time or attention, and so in a modified way Margaret and I resumed many of the habits of our former life. Margaret absolved me from all work and allowed me to be with her nearly the whole of the waking day. They were grave, quiet days, not untouched with moments of deep sorrow, but I look back upon them as days of profound happiness. To have Margaret with me so constantly was itself a great boon, and she drew nearer to me than had been possible before. When Margaret came to the Château, she came quite untouched by any great sorrow. In my own life, in spite of its brave show of high spirit, there is the impress of a double loss, the death of my grandfather Percyfield and the greater tragedy of my mother's death. I had been living all of this over again these past few days, and so perfectly could I enter into Margaret's feelings that it seemed to me already, in a spiritual sense, we were man and wife, and beginning to live our common life together. We spent more of the day outdoors in the garden, or walking or riding our wheels. Vigorous physical exercise is always a great relief to

the pain of the spirit, and these beautiful summer days I rejoiced to take Margaret on long and rather hard outings. I tried to tire her just as far as I dared so that she might be sure to sleep at night.

Margaret is much more conventional in her faith than I am, and carries many more traditional beliefs than real ones. Mrs. Ravenel, like most Southerners, was a very strict Churchwoman, and believed according to the letter rather than according to the spirit. Margaret's strong nature made it impossible for her to accept many of the illogical doctrines which Mrs. Ravenel professed, and pleased herself by believing that she believed. In Margaret's world there had been heretofore no alternative between this conventional faith and utter disbelief. Neither position was possible to Margaret, and so she had remained ostensibly bound to the old traditions, not denying them, but getting no living comfort out of them. It is a region of vague hopes and large doubts and frequent heartaches, a veritable valley of shadows. It is a region very thickly tenanted. And the souls there are commonly very noble souls. It is their strength that denies the literalness of the old faith, with all its deficiency of imagination and flexibility and sweet growth. It is their religion that makes impossible the vulgarity of destructive agnosticism. Margaret is one of them, how thoroughly so I did not know until after Mrs. Ravenel's death. Before this, Margaret had given me many glimpses into this region of spiritual shadows, but in the bright springtime of our love it was natural

for us to turn to a thousand other topics, and to give this only casual place among the rest. Now it is quite different. Margaret's recovery from the shock of her mother's death has been a supreme personal effort, prompted by her love for me, by her sense of duty, and above all, I think, by her feeling of *noblesse oblige*. Margaret is a soldier's daughter, and though he may have fought in a mistaken cause, he did it generously and sincerely, and this, his daughter, is cast in the same heroic mould. But under it all, I can see that Margaret's spirit is hungry for some more assured ground of belief. What would I not give to be able to share my own radiant faith with her, a faith which is not made up of impossible traditions, but is a revelation constantly renewing itself in the heart. No creed, be it Nicene or Bostonian, is truly religious unless it frame itself in such general terms as to allow for this evolution of the human spirit.

I do not use the word God as Margaret has been accustomed to hearing the word used. To me it is a terrible thing to believe in a petty, book-keeping god who expects to get more than even with us when the great day of account comes; or in a local god of Palestine who selects one people to be the instrument of his mercy, and another people to be the instrument of his wrath. I am too good a democrat for that, and much too religious so to blaspheme the idea of deity. The God in whose presence I daily live, and whom I earnestly worship, is the great cosmic God, the one whom some of the Hebrew prophets appre-

hended, whom I think Jesus declared, the permeating intelligence and spirit of the world, that appears in each one of us and gathers us all into one unity. I grant that it is a vague conception, vague just in proportion as the reality for which it stands transcends human experience. But it is not more vague than the conceptions of physical science. Indeed I think of God somewhat as I do of the ether. The ether is the intellectual medium in which the drama of the physical world takes place. And so God seems to me the permeating spiritual medium in which everything happens that ever does happen in the spiritual world. My religious life has its high festivals, its special times and seasons, its ecstasies, and the even tenor of its ways, but in effect it is the whole of my life, the entire twenty-four hours of my day. It is a matter of the daily thought and emotion, the daily food and dress, the daily work and play, the daily intercourse with the neighbor, and the respect that I pay to myself. To make God manifest, to accept only the best, — this to me is religion.

At this crisis in Margaret's life it is in the question of immortality that she feels the greatest interest. To Margaret, as to many church people whom I have met, immortality is a possibility, at most a faint hope, but never a positive belief. She marvels that I should hold so strenuously to it. She is afraid, I think, that I believe it because I want to believe it, that I am all unwilling to give up the brave spirits who have passed before us into the undiscovered country, or to admit

even to myself that they may have passed into nothingness. It is a wholesome caution, for usually our thought turns on this deep problem when death forces the question. It is an old mistake, that of calling desires beliefs. But I think I have allowed for this. I have said, if death end all, if that be the truth of it, then that is what I want to believe. For no man in his right senses wishes to be either self-deceived or other-deceived. I have doubted immortality, even disbelieved it, but now I believe it on as strong warrant as I have for any of my scientific beliefs. In one sense, immortality cannot be experienced; it is not a fact of experience in the same immediate way that certain minor scientific facts are. But neither can the paleozoic age be experienced, nor space, nor time, nor cause and effect. They are inductions from experience. And so to me is immortality. It is an induction from experience. In a world where every reality is essentially spiritual or intellectual, whichever term you prefer, where even the study of nature, as soon as it passes from mere observation into orderly science, becomes a mental rather than a physical fact, I can only imagine the disappearance of spirit by picturing the annihilation of the universe itself. Without the mental part that we give to all of our so-called facts, they would cease to exist. It is possible that the universe does shrivel up in this way and disappear, but it is less probable, I think, than any one of the great possibilities which science rejects and feels warranted in accepting their opposite as fact.

Margaret and I spoke of these deep problems at so great length, for when the heart is torn between love and sorrow it does not turn to the trivial things of life, but to the very deepest.

And so the days slipped into the past, and it was August, and the eve of our wedding day.

There was a sweet solemnity about that last evening of our separate lives. We spent the early part of it in our beloved garden, in the duke's summer house, and later we sat in the great drawing-room, looking out upon the Lake. There was no moon, but the stars were as bright as so many beacon lights, and from time to time, a meteor flashed its tiny line of flame across the sky. From the opposite shore, the lamps of Versoix and Coppet sent their light gleaming out upon the waters, far enough away not to be intrusive, near enough to be cheery and human. It seemed to me then, as I sat there, with Margaret at my side, her hand in mine, her curling chestnut hair against my shoulder, that much there is in life that is doubtful, but that the one reality of all is love. In thinking it over it seems to me still that in this, at least, I was pretty near right. And when at last Margaret left me, to sleep that last sleep of her maidenhood, she put her arms about me and kissed me, and for the first time called me husband. Then, in very truth, I felt a consecrated man, and my strength seemed as the strength of ten.

CHAPTER XII

AN UNUSUAL HONEYMOON

It was our wedding day. When I awoke, the warm sun was streaming in at my eastern window, the one where I fancied that the Duchess Margherita sat of a morning with her little son. I glanced around my great, bare apartment. It had been my home for days and nights that when added together made up a full year. Here I had worked. Here I had striven as a man may to purify my own spirit, to clear my own vision, to chasten my own speech, to prepare myself as any acolyte might for the high priesthood of letters, to school myself for the social service that I hoped to render to America. Here I had wrought for days and nights, working in hope, and in passionate sincerity. I had stepped aside from the world of action for a year, to think, and to learn how to express the result of my thought. And the harvest of this year, I felt, had not been small.

Here in this old south tower I had dreamed dreams, and sweet memories had crowded thick around me. I had re-lived the days of my boyhood. I had tasted again its joys and amusements, its fresh young love. The little Margaret had been with me at dusk and in the moonlight. My mother and my grandfather Percy-

field had been called out of the past into the present. Charlotte, with her laughing blue eyes and delicious banter, had been an ever-present guest. And here it was, best of all, that there had been revealed to me my love for Margaret. Here had come that wonderful night when I first knew that I loved her. You will not wonder that this great, bare room was to me a holy place.

And to-day I was to leave it, and to leave my careless youth. I was to enter upon the responsible double-life of manhood, to come into the determinate good. I got out of bed with all these thoughts rushing through my head. I felt very grave and very solemn. So much had suddenly come into my life that I had the sense of being almost overwhelmed. The youth that I was leaving had been fair and pure. Whatever it had lacked of accomplishment, of performance, of positive good, it was at least unstained. I was going to Margaret without any reservations or confessions. The beautiful name she gave me, I might honorably accept. On a man's wedding day he may be perfectly frank with himself, and heaven knows he is a happy man if this frankness need not take the form of regrets. I could speak thus of myself to myself in all humility, for I knew that the merit was not mine. It was a part of that patrimony of good-breeding which sums up the struggles and purposes of many generations of red-blooded men and high-spirited women. And I, who reaped the fruit of this high endeavor, stood before it in humility and gratitude.

As I looked at my own strong body, with its almost boyish freshness and wholesome color, I resolved that should God give me sons and daughters of my own, I would, with his help and Margaret's, instruct them in all things, passing on unimpaired the gift that my ancestors had bequeathed to me, and teaching my children to make their religion a matter of the whole day, of the body and the mind and the spirit, and so to push forward the eternal quest of the perfect life.

Then I dressed quickly and ran downstairs to greet my bride.

I could have asked no better day. It was clear and still, with that mellow ripeness which comes with midsummer. The Château was as lovely as the day. In the early morning, while we still slept, the indefatigable Châtelaine had transformed the big drawing-room into a veritable garden. There were great branches of greenery and large growing plants from Monsieur du Chêne's hothouses, and large bunches of cut flowers on all sides. How much I appreciated Mademoiselle Werner's forethought in having no flowers at the funeral. I think she had this happier day in mind. The usual rugs had all been removed from the drawing-room, and the dark oak floor freshly polished. In their stead was a curious, richly colored rug in the very centre of the room. It was an old wedding-rug, such as they use in Sweden. It had been the gift of an old Swedish count when the Châtelaine's mother was married, and was used only on the occasion of weddings. The prevailing color was yel-

low, in deference, I suppose, to the color of the guests' clothing, as prescribed by Hymen. It is a pretty custom.

England and Ireland had constructed a large cross made of dark-green ivy, and had placed it back of where the clergyman was to stand. It gave the drawing-room quite the air of a church, and the large windows in their frames of greenery added to this effect. On all sides I saw the evidence of loving care. When I tried to thank the Châtelaine, her eyes filled, and she said that it was nothing at all. I know that when you love people, it seems nothing to render them this sweet service, but to them it is everything. It seemed as if every one tried to make up for the loss of the gentle mother, whose presence would have so beautifully completed this ideal wedding.

It was a small company that gathered in this lovely flower-embowered room to see Margaret and me married, the same company that had gone with us to Clarens, except Mademoiselle Werner and Scotland. Mademoiselle Werner sent Margaret a bunch of the most exquisite flowers. They were all simple flowers, but they were arranged with a skill such as I had never seen before. There were white roses and pink roses, and luxuriant purple heliotrope, and pink and white carnations, with a touch of green in the way of fern and smilax. Usually I much prefer a bunch of flowers to be all of the same kind, and it takes rare skill to equal the beauty of this simple arrangement. But Mademoiselle Werner's bouquet had evidently

been copied from some old piece of Dresden china, and had all of its delicacy and charm. It was characteristic of Mademoiselle Werner, as was her equally exquisite note to me wishing Margaret and me a life better than the best. Mademoiselle Werner did not come to the wedding herself, lest she might recall her singing to Margaret and so sadden her unnecessarily. Scotland took this occasion to spend the day at Ouchy, which I thought was uncommonly uncivil of her. The Châtelaine said, however, that it was all right. She evidently has a key to Scotland's character that I entirely fail to possess. I asked the Châtelaine if Scotland's knight was at Ouchy, the barelegged laird. The Châtelaine said he was n't barelegged, and he was n't a laird, so that I am left without any theory whatever, unless — But that is impossible.

In addition to our little company, all the servants of the Château were present, and also my faithful music teacher, Madame Martigny. For the official part of the ceremony we had the pleasant young clergyman from the American church at Geneva, and the American consul. I wanted duplicate state papers, so that I might send one to the little parish near New Orleans, where for generations the family records of the Ravenels have been duly filed, their births and marriages and deaths, and the other to the Percyfield archives at Uplands. I should have been entirely happy could we but have had Charlotte and Frederic with us, and Peyton and the musician. They all sent us cablegrams, sweet messages of love and congratulation, as

did also the New Orleans relatives, and even my aunt Percyfield. The musician's cablegram read, "Beethoven fortissimo," which I quite easily understood. He plays Schumann and I prefer Chopin, but we both love Beethoven.

Nothing could have been simpler than this quiet wedding of ours. It was celebrated at high noon, after the wedding custom of both families. It is strange how, in these solemn occasions of life, one turns so persistently and loyally to the honorable customs established by one's ancestors. It was the most natural thing in the world for Margaret and me to wish to follow these customs with fidelity. Happily both families had observed much the same usage. It always takes us with a shivering sort of surprise when we hear young people talk of the latest fashions in these solemn matters. There was no one who could properly give the bride away, and neither Margaret nor I was sorry to omit this mediæval custom, for it did not in the least accord with our own idea of marriage. To us it was the giving of one to the other, and we could better symbolize it by walking side by side. It was just noon when Madame Martigny played the stirring wedding march from Lohengrin, and Margaret and I passed into the drawing-room to be made formally man and wife.

Margaret was dressed very simply in a white gown. I do not know what the material was, for, as you may have noticed, I am rather lacking in discrimination in all such matters. I call the white things 'dimity,' if

they please me, and 'stuff,' if they don't. I only know that this wedding-gown of Margaret's stood quite at the head of the dimity class. Margaret was not pale, nor was her face sad. There was a gentle sweetness, born of her sorrow, but otherwise she was her radiant, natural self. It was the gladness of her great love that surrounded her, as with an atmosphere, and sent a thrill through every one present, even, I believe, down to the stolid Marie, who murmured "la belle demoiselle." At the door of the drawing-room the Châtelaine slipped something white into Margaret's hand. It was a vellum-covered little book, something like a missal, containing the Episcopal wedding service, and had been illuminated by the Châtelaine herself. It was her wedding gift to Margaret. In the back there was a place for the names of all the witnesses, and here we have the signatures of that kind company, beginning with the Châtelaine and ending with Madame Martigny.

I have never been to a wedding so sweet, so solemn. This was due in part to the fact that it was my own wedding. But aside from that and quite impartially, I believe it was a perfect wedding. The real marriage between Margaret and myself had already taken place. The words of the clergyman were only the outer and dignified expression of this inner ceremony. It was not nervous; it was not hurried. It was not overshadowed by the anxiety that something might go wrong. It was all so lacking in elaborateness that there was nothing which could possibly go amiss. There

were no bridesmaids to toy with their flowers or their gowns; no 'best man' to be watching apprehensively for the appearance of the bridal party; no ushers to be fidgeting with their four-inch collars, or trying frantically to button an obstinate glove, or flirting with some pretty bridesmaid whom they hoped one day to be leading themselves to the altar. There was no crowding in and out of carriages, and enduring the vulgar gaze of the curious, no distractions of any sort whatever. There was enough form to give dignity and beauty to the ceremony, but not enough to overload it and hide its real meaning. It was in effect what I wished it to be, the festival of our love, of Margaret's love and mine. And when the ceremony came to an end, and the clergyman in his clear, manly voice said, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I pronounce you man and wife. Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," Margaret and I remained for some time kneeling, absorbed in the wonder and the sacredness of it.

Later in the day we drove into Geneva and took the night train for Paris, en route to the work in London; and with us we carried the love and blessing of three as noble old gentlewomen as ever gathered under one roof.

It was an unusual honeymoon that Margaret and I spent. We rested a day in Paris. I wanted to show Margaret her picture in the Louvre. Then we went directly on to London, by way of Calais and Dover.

It was no longer possible to go to Mansfield House, so we established ourselves in Torrington Square. As it was to be our home for two months at least, I took great care to select rooms that were bright and sunny. We made them as attractive as possible by getting out our own pictures and belongings, such draperies and bric-à-brac as Margaret and I had stored away in our several trunks. We were greatly surprised to find that we had picked up so much. It was quite a distinct and delightful sensation to speak of 'our' things. Everything new that I bought I had sent home to 'Mrs. John Percyfield.' It was such a joy to say the name and to see it written. It took me some time, though, to get used to the cold-blooded, unemotional way in which the clerks in the different shops put it down in their scrawly, running handwriting. You might have thought that it was just an ordinary name, instead of being brand-new and full of sentiment.

Our rooms were very sweet-looking when Margaret and I had arranged all our pretty things and put the finishing touches to them. We had bright silk blankets from Rome, and bronzes from Naples, and wood mosaics from Sorrento, and carvings from Geneva, and several marbles from Florence, and photographs and water-colors from pretty much everywhere. Then I added a number of splendid growing plants, and every few days the friendly old florist around the corner sent us in fresh cut flowers. But the greatest treasure in these pretty rooms, the fairest flower of

all, was my very dear Margaret, my beautiful bride, my comrade wife. I had always disliked London as a dull, murky city of very doubtful attractions, a place where one might buy some new clothes, take a dip into the Royal Academy, and be gone by the first convenient train. But with Margaret at my side, London was a veritable paradise. The two months went round with a speed that I could hardly have believed possible. We made a few excursions, such as to Oxford and Cambridge, and the nearer cathedral towns, and we had a few delightful days on the Isle of Wight, walking over Shanklin Down to Ventnor and the great St. Catherine's Light. To be at Ventnor and St. Catherine's carried us back to America and made our home-going seem very near, for both of us had so often looked at these spots from the deck of a trans-Atlantic steamer going up or down the Channel.

But the greater part of our time we stopped in London and busied ourselves with the grave social work which had taken us to England. With Margaret at my side, it seemed to me that my eyes had more than double power. I saw such a multitude of things which without her quick glance would have quite escaped me. Margaret threw herself into the work with absolute single-heartedness and was the greatest help. I had not supposed it possible that she could go in for the work with such thoroughness and such scientific care. What particularly impressed me was her power of putting her finger unerringly on the weak spot in any movement or plan. It was her per-

fectly fresh, unspoiled point of view, and her sound instinct that gave her this marvelous critical power. It seemed to me, indeed, that had I consulted my work solely and quite left my heart and its needs out of the question, the cleverest thing I could possibly have done was to have married Margaret. But even greater than this direct help was the indirect help that Margaret gave me. With my great love singing in my heart night and day, and with Margaret always near, I had a power such as I had never known before.

Margaret's personal interests were characteristic. It was the human side, the home, that most appealed to her. The housing of the poor, the needs of old age, the ministrations to motherhood, these were problems that she mastered in much greater details than I was able to do. When I told Margaret this, she said that the knowledge was all in the family and she would guard it so that we might act upon it when we came to America. This, indeed, was the burden of all our work. We were not in London as mere observers, mere students of social conditions. We were there to acquire social methods, social insight, that we might the better serve America. I was so glad to have Margaret undertake this side of our inquiry, for it was all vitally important, and she could do it so much better than ever I could. Margaret saw the personal side, and with a woman's quick wit and sympathy set about the relief of the individual. I am always tremendously sorry for the individuals, and especially for the aged

poor, — God help them, — but I have always felt nevertheless that my own power of service is in the direction of that political action which will make this suffering less possible. Margaret, with her warm heart, stood for relief, and I, with something of my grandfather Marston's puritan conscience in me, stood for prevention. In such a transition time as the present, there is large need of both types of service, and Margaret and I worked together admirably. She kept my doctrines human, and I helped to keep her practice wise. Many of the problems, touching as they did both individual need and social polity, we took the keenest pleasure in studying out together.

Such a problem was the pensioning of old age. It has this double side to it, the appeal for human sympathy and the need of wise social economy. Margaret saw at once the added self-respect and dignity and happiness of the poor old people, could they live, however frugally, on a state pension, instead of depending on the unwilling pittance of a hard-pressed son or daughter, or still worse, instead of being thrown on the poor rates or relegated to the poor-house. I knew of what Margaret was thinking. She was thinking of Mrs. Ravenel, and of the tragedy which might so easily have befallen her had age and illness found her without money and without friends. My own thought rushed along with Margaret's. I thought of my own mother. I am a strong man, and I do not often weep, but the tears fill my eyes when I recall the sad, patient, suffering faces of the poor old women

whom Margaret and I saw during those days in London, and when I think that her mother or mine might have been one of these poor, despised ones, the thought becomes fairly intolerable. What are we men of England and America thinking about when we allow, in the midst of our great wealth, such indignity, such keen physical suffering, to multitudes of old women, the mothers of a large part of the brawn and muscle of the nation, women whose age and whose weakness make the most touching claim upon our knightliness and our devotion? And how do we meet this claim, we fortunate ones, who are young and strong and rich? For the most part, we ignore it. We let these women suffer cold and hunger and nakedness, the bitter dregs of poverty and loneliness. We let them go uncomforted and unattended to the tomb. God forgive us, and put it into our hearts and hands to do something more worthy of our manhood and our humanity!

Margaret is naturally less interested in such purely democratic movements as the taking over of the city tram-lines, and the municipalizing of public utilities generally, for they are more abstract and less immediately human. But they interest me vastly, for I want to see such extension of the function of government that it may bring about the positive freedom of the individual, and not merely save him from the fate of the man who went down to Jericho. Although Margaret is always ready to play the Good Samaritan, she is coming around to my point of view that private charities

are an indictment of inadequate social action, are essentially undemocratic and undesirable. We lend a hand to this work of relief, for meanwhile the suffering is here and may not decently be neglected, but we see increasingly that this method is not the way out. The function of the state is to make private charities unnecessary. It can do this by removing those misfortunes which can be cured, the misfortunes of ignorance and physical defect and ill health and idleness; and by honorably providing for those misfortunes which cannot be removed, the misfortunes of old age and accident and illness.

Most of the social problems with which Margaret and I are brought in contact in this great, unhappy London have both of these elements in them, the individual and the collective, and while temperamentally she is drawn to the one and I to the other, we have large common ground in all of them. For me the path out of all this appalling misery is the most uncompromising social democracy, the administration of the earth and its priceless resources for human good and not for private profit. I can no longer believe that any decent social condition will ever be brought about by the operation of what is politely called "enlightened self-interest." Practically, this enlightened self-interest is merely a world-wide game of grab which is neither enlightened nor is it self-interest, for it is dreadfully difficult while *you* are grabbing to prevent the other fellow from grabbing back, and there is the deeper tragedy that meanwhile life is

passing, is gone, is lost, — and the game was not worth the candle.

There was a gentler home side to our London life which perhaps helped us more than anything else to get at what we wanted. I had had a second purpose in making our rooms at Torrington Square as pleasant and attractive as possible. I knew that Margaret would not at all care to go into society. She did not put on the traditional heavy mourning for Mrs. Ravenel. It seems to me a needless cruelty to put these hideous barriers of crape between one's self and the rest of the world, and also a distinct unkindness to other people. Margaret dressed so unobtrusively that only had your attention been called to it would you have recognized the dress as mourning. She wished to meet the social workers of London, and so our pleasant drawing-room soon became a modest salon. It was in Torrington Square rather than in the shabby little lecture halls which we occasionally frequented, that we learned most about London's problems, and the methods by which she is trying to solve them. How proud I was of my dear Margaret. A natural gravitation seemed to bring these earnest, somewhat hard-pressed men and women to Margaret's salon, and I am sure that they found here a sweet refreshment which quite compensated them for their kindness in coming to us. Twice a week, on Wednesday and Sunday evenings, we have been regularly at home. If the evening was at all chilly, we had a cheerful fire of English sea-coal blazing on our hearth.

Some sweet fresh flowers stood on the table. The lamps were carefully shaded. And in the midst was Margaret, looking to me like some sweet saint come down from heaven, and to the Londoners who gathered around her, surely one of the most charming of the many charming women who have held court in London drawing-rooms. We maintained the habit of the monologue. In this way, I think, we gave of our best, and got the very best from our guests.

Other evenings of the week we had one or two people to dinner. Our establishment was too modest to permit any extensive entertaining, even had we been in the mood for it, and I have always preferred these small dinner parties, informal and frequent, to the most astounding extravagances that Mr. Boldt or Delmonico can get up. Aunt Viney was quite in her element and willingly acted as the *chef*. I think she has the genuine social instinct. It seemed to be a great relief to the old woman to be hard at work, and so Margaret let her do as much as she would. Aunt Viney made our table resemble New Orleans cookery as nearly as the London markets would allow. It was amusing, too, to see what delight Aunt Viney took in the English language, after her enforced silence on the Continent. She talked to every one who came in her way, and completely scandalized the wooden English servants by her lengthy conversations with Margaret and me. Sometimes our dinner guests remained a part of the evening, sometimes they accompanied us if we happened to be going out, sometimes

they left shortly after dinner to keep engagements of their own. London affairs begin so late that by being prompt, we could manage a successful little dinner party, and still have the evening for other things or for our reading. I think that Margaret and I met some of the most delightful men in London that we can ever hope to meet anywhere. There was a wholesomeness and courtesy about them that constantly reminded me of my grandfather Percyfield as he must have been when a young man. Many of them still remembered Charlotte and the summer she spent in England. Some of the men from Toynbee Hall came to us, and many of our friends from Clement's Inn.

It was a curious and unusual honeymoon that Margaret and I had in London. I kept Margaret almost pitilessly occupied, for I knew that it was the greater kindness. It would have been quite impossible to go pleasuring in the ordinary sense of the word. It would have been unwise to go home. Our home, like our wedding day, I wanted to be established in happiness. And our children, when they came, I wanted to be conceived in joy and not in sorrow.

Margaret was bravery itself; but she had received a wound that nothing but time and love and service could heal. Our life in London was absolutely disinterested, but it brought us such deep happiness that I am tempted to write, not as an epigram, but as a practical maxim of life that the most complete unselfishness is also the most successful selfishness. And this must always be so. The personal career, limited

to this one world-life, this one incarnation, is absolutely doomed to disappointment. It is a story in which the losses exceed the gains. Our dear ones die; our affairs get tangled; our powers wane; health and youth are spent; the hearing dulls, the eye weakens, the emotions are worn; one tragedy succeeds another, — it is a losing game. But when one's interests are concentrated on something bigger than the immediate personal career, upon the social good, upon the larger existence in time and space, upon the cosmic career of the purified soul, it is possible to be eternally, youthfully happy. This supreme happiness came to Margaret as it had once come, after months of keen suffering, to me. No selfish idling could have brought it, no dangling in museums and galleries, no aimless wandering in the mountains or by the sea, no selfish pursuit of any kind whatever. It comes only through human service and human sympathy and human outreaching towards that which is eternal and divine. This life among the social workers of London, this daily contact with the suffering poor, did more to assure Margaret of the immortality of love and life than could any abstract philosophy of mine. And when at last we turned our faces towards America, we went to it chastened by a common sorrow, but illumined by a common hope.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GREAT REPUBLIC

One who reads the alluring booklets of the steamship companies might think that quite the most delightful thing in all the world would be to cross the Atlantic in some floating palace, such as is pictured in this oceanic literature. But it is well to add still another grain of salt. In point of statistics I believe it is one of the safest things to do, much safer than to travel on the average American express train. But though these booklets are optimistic in their view of life, and though the floating palaces, under certain conditions of the system and the weather, may be very uncomfortable places, it still remains true that the present passenger fleet of the Atlantic, if gathered together in one roadstead, would make, by all odds, the most impressive navy that the world has ever seen. Now that Margaret and I are back at Uplands, I have crossed the Atlantic six times, but I cannot see one of these splendid steamers, with their graceful lines and beautiful finish and implied speed, without as much of a thrill as swept over me the very first time that Charlotte and I ever crossed the ocean. There is something in the Anglo-Saxon blood that still responds to

the dash of the waves and the sniff of salt air. It has made us a colonizing people and is perhaps partly responsible for our imperialism. The English are our modern Phœnicians, with Mr. Kipling as their exultant bard. But even a quiet gentleman like myself, who does not go in for either trade or imperialism, is conscious of a decided thrill when the waves dash high and the salt air blows stiff and keen. The original thrill deepens, in fact, for since that first crossing I have been working at odd moments over a new scheme of water propulsion. When the scheme is perfected I shall be having a yacht of my own, big enough to cross the Atlantic, or for that matter to go around the world in, should such a trip seem necessary and profitable. The study of life is so fascinating that you never know where it will carry you. Margaret calls it our vocation, this study of life.

The yacht has not been built, not even committed to paper, for I have not got to it yet. But it has an increasingly distinct outline in my imagination, and I foresee that it may become one of those realities of the mind, which, almost in spite of one's self, must pass out into three dimensions. It is dangerous to entertain ideas which one would not care to have blossom into facts, for an earnest man, as I have been saying all along, is pretty sure to get what he really wants. It is so with my yacht. I do not quite accept the idea yet, for there are several other things that I want to accomplish first. But it is beginning to loom up as a possibility. I think of it as you do of places still

some distance ahead on the time-table. You must pass over the intervening ground and it is always possible that you may get off at one of the intervening stations, and so the distant place remains but a name, a possibility made impossible by some other decision. That is the way it is with the "Maxwell," for such is the name that I have given to my nebulous yacht. She is named after Clerk Maxwell, the greatest scientist of the nineteenth century. You may remember about him, the quiet Scottish gentleman who worked out the identity of light and electricity; but perhaps not, for the names of these profound investigators are often less known than those of the smaller men who have popularized their results. Both types are necessary and honorable, but for the genius I have myself a reverence which is even religious. It seems to me a godlike thing to be original and to push out even a little bit into the unknown.

The Maxwell is the most rapid, as well as the most beautiful craft that ever made light of latitude and longtitude. I have rated her speed at a hundred miles an hour, and this would put you in New York from Southampton in twenty-one hours, but if you went against the sun, from New York to Southampton, it would take you thirty-one, as the steeple clocks would count the matter. When the musician, whose mathematical tendencies are pronounced and sometimes troublesome, asks me on what data I have calculated the speed, I must needs answer that one hundred is a tidy number, the square of ten, and all that sort of

thing, and rests on more poetic grounds than mere questions of pressure and resistance.

But as I have said, the Maxwell is still in the future. It was only that all her details pressed in upon me that morning when Margaret and I deserted our pleasant quarters in Torrington Square, and put ourselves in the way of coming to America. Our steamer was one of the biggest and whitest and most beautiful of all the predecessors of the Maxwell. She boasts a very high and mighty name on the sailing list of the company, but most of the steamers in the trans-Atlantic service which have attained to any distinction and character have also a second name by which they are known in the inner circle of esoteric globe trotters. Ours was long ago christened the "White Seal," and though no champagne went the wrong way at this second christening and no magnate's little daughter smashed a bottle so far front as the bow, it is by this second name that Margaret and I know and love the piece of three-dimensional poetry which brought us back to the Great Republic. The White Seal seemed to us indeed more like a private yacht than a mere winner of dividends.

It was the middle of October when Margaret and I left England. The day was fair, with that ripe, blue haziness which in the autumn bespeaks Nature's contentment with accomplished work. The task of providing food for her millions of children had been successfully performed, as you could easily see by looking in at the open doors of the well-filled barns,

or better still, into the rosy, satisfied faces of the farmers. It was not yet in season for the sap to be running into fresh bud and leaf, or for the earth and sky to be bringing forth their children of blade and ear. Nature was at rest, and her quiescent loveliness seemed brooding over the English landscape like a visible presence, a benediction before the fog and storm, the labor and care out of which was to be born the harvest of another year.

This aspect of the world fell in well with Margaret's mood and mine. Our present work was done. Like Nature, we were drawing the full breath of an autumnal parenthesis. Our English sojourn had brought us a much larger harvest than we had had the wit to foresee, and in our hearts we felt very, very rich. In us, at least, the Anglo-American alliance was an accomplished fact. We shall never again be able to look upon England as an alien country. We shall deplore her political blunders, her lapses in diplomatic faith, her unrighteousness in the cause of imperialism, her unmitigated spirit of trade. We shall even go on being amused at some of her people, at their obtuseness, at their lack of humor, at their provincial and childlike assurance of superiority, at their feeble imagination. But deeper than our criticism is our love. We feel the Anglo-Saxon brotherhood, the kinship of a large purpose. We shall remember as long as we draw breath those earnest men and women at Mansfield House, at Toynbee Hall, at Clement's Inn, in the few London homes into which we penetrated. We

are glad to speak the same mother tongue as the modest, learned men whom we met at Oxford and Cambridge; of the noble canon who moved heaven and earth to secure a scandalously rich living and then had the stipend cut down to a suitable amount; of the two sisters we met on the Isle of Wight, living so successfully the life beautiful; and of dozens of other fine souls, an ornament to our common blood and our common humanity.

But my own deepest gratitude to London is for a very practical lesson I learned there. You know that social reformers, aristocratic as well as plebeian, are a bit given to the sophomoric, and want to make heaven without the voyage. To be quite honest, Mr. John Percyfield, of Uplands, Chester County, Pennsylvania, has not always escaped this weakness of his class. It is too much to say that London, even in two months can knock all that out of a man; but it warns him. The jolly way the Fabians had of laughing at themselves, and the splendid good nature they brought to their quarrel with existing evils, was to me a valuable object lesson, for my own virtue is of the indignant sort, spending too much of its force in heat. The Fabians have a genuine millennium programme tucked away in the back of their heads, and down deep in their hearts, but they keep it in the background instead of in the foreground of their effort, and this bit of wisdom makes the difference between success and defeat. Meanwhile, they are after the milkman and the butcher and the gas company and the water

supply and the tramways and the unearned increment, and are bent on socializing public opinion and private practice, slowly, if need be, but still on socializing it. The hot bloods call all this opportunism, but as long as this means lending an honest hand to helpful, practical measures, however immediate and limited, it is a taunt that can well be borne. The Fabian essays are good reading for a man who wants really to serve and not merely to fizz.

So Margaret and I went on board the White Seal in high spirits, not outwardly exuberant as we might have been a few months earlier, but with that subdued excitement which shows itself in sparkling eye and heightened color. We were literally on top of the wave.

You may call it a lover's prejudice if you like, but that morning, when we mounted the gangplank which carried us out of Europe, it seemed to me that Margaret had never looked so beautiful. She was excited at the prospect of going home, and, furthermore, her beauty had a certain maturity about it. Had Margaret been less beautiful than when I married her, I should have been sadly distressed, for it would have seemed to me that our married life had some unmistakable flaw in it. I should think that husbands, in whose daily presence wives lose their beauty and attractiveness, would feel as much rebuked as if Nature had spoken to them openly. This human fading is a bitter tragedy. We must all grow old, but there is a beauty for every age, and if we miss it, there is some-

thing wrong. We may not keep the bloom of spring, but we may lay claim to the loveliness of summer, the glory of the autumn, and that solemn whiteness of the winter that goes before the resurrection. Whatever my own prejudices may have been, however, the other passengers could not be accused of sharing them, and their undisguised admiration would have told me that Margaret is a very beautiful woman, had I needed any outer testimony.

Aunt Viney, of course, was with us. She is mortally afraid of the water. I am sure that every night and morning, and many times during the day, she prayed most fervently that the ship might not go to the bottom. But in spite of her fear she was as delighted as Margaret and I to be coming back to America.

The voyage was absolutely uneventful. Day after day the sun illumined its shortening portion. Night after night the stars laid claim to the lengthening darkness. Margaret and I spent all our time on deck. The steamer, fortunately, was not crowded, and it was easy to find a quiet spot where we could place our steamer chairs side by side, and there, wrapped in our warm rugs, we would sit by the hour, reading aloud or talking, or even in complete and friendly silence. It was a delight to feel that no interruption could come to us. There are people, you know, who experience an ennui on board ship which they say is worse than seasickness. They have n't Margaret at their side, and, perhaps, not so very much in their heads

either. Margaret and I are both good sailors. I used to be a pretty poor one, but that was before I knew any better. I am afraid we were not very sociable. After the first day or two, it came to be recognized apparently that we were wedding-journeyers, and we were let alone with a scrupulousness that got to be amusing. For persons of such pronounced social instincts as Margaret and I, this reserve might have been reprehensible, but from the bits of conversation we did catch, it seemed that there were enough persons on board bent on personal narrative to make the most sphinx-like silence on our part not only forgivable, but even meritorious. When you are at sea, you are all in the same boat, as Charlotte, the humorist, puts it, and this fact seems to invite the most astonishing confidences. When friendship moves at too rapid a rate it is apt to spend itself and grow weary.

Margaret and I lived in such delightful isolation, that we might almost have been on an island. But it might not have been a desert island, for we should sadly have missed the ministrations of the deck steward. At eleven, he brought us bouillon and hardtack; at four, he appeared with hot tea and little triangular sandwiches. Margaret did not quite approve of my method of counting, but in reality we ate five meals a day, aside from any crackers or fruit which might disappear in our stateroom during the process of dressing. The larder of the Maxwell will have to be very commodious. In fact our appetites were so keen that

I had to invent a theory to account for them, and even to excuse them. A wholesome appetite is a good thing, but one would blush a little to be accounted ravenous. At sea, however, the constant vibration digests your food rapidly, and makes it entirely decent and reasonable to eat twice as much as would keep you going on land. Such, at least, is my theory, and it has brought comfort to a number of persons at once scrupulous and very hungry.

Before ever I crossed the ocean, I supposed that one was constantly coming up with other gay ships of the line, and even passing the time of day with them. I was amazed, appalled, almost terrified by the awful loneliness of the ocean. Even now it never ceases to impress me. Margaret and I were on the most frequented of all ocean routes, and yet a whole day would pass when we did not catch a glimpse of another steamer, or even of the dim white sails of some loitering ship. Occasionally, we saw a school of porpoises, true Fröbelians, since their school consisted of well-ordered and wholesome play. Once, we caught sight of a spouting whale, but we were unable to answer when, later, the irrepressible Charlotte asked what he was spouting about. Then there was a diminutive piece of ice, called by courtesy an iceberg, but the captain had more respect for it than we did, for he steered well out of its way. He had in mind the nine tenths or eight ninths or some other vulgar fraction of it that remained under water, and might be a source of danger.

But it was at night that the mystery and loneliness of the ocean pressed in upon us. We had no moon save a dainty little wisp of a new moon towards the end of the voyage. Margaret and I used to have our chairs taken to the upper deck, and there in the darkness and the silence we felt the elation of rushing noiselessly through space. All artificial lights were veiled, the skylights even were shrouded in heavy canvas, so that the officer on the bridge might the better discern the lights of any passing ship. We had only the stars for company and the soft rush of water far below against the ship's sides. We found this infinitely better than any concert they could get up down in the cabin. I am so happy that Margaret is an outdoor woman. I foresee that we shall spend the greater part of our lives in the open. We seemed very much outdoors on that upper deck of the White Seal, and the exultation of it took great hold upon us. When we were not snugly wrapped in our rugs, and in our comfortable steamer chairs, we were walking briskly up and down the decks, or were established for the moment out in the very bow, watching the phosphorescent fire, as the ship leaped forwards to meet the oncoming waves.

It is possible in eight days to do a great deal of talking. And Margaret and I had much to talk about, — of our chance meeting at the Château, of the wonder of our awakening love, about Mrs. Ravenel, of our London experiences, and the books we were reading. But most of all we spoke of America, and

of the new life that we were soon to be living here. Beyond the fact that our home was to be in the country, near Uplands if possible, and that we were to be devoting ourselves to the idealizing of the daily life, and to the practical work of loving the neighbor, we had no plans. We were en route to the unexpected quite as much as I was when I went to Europe. It was the old quest, the quest of the indeterminate good. With Margaret at my side, I had no end of hope. As the little flag on the chart in the companionway that marked our daily run crept slowly westward, I felt an ever-deepening passion for America, for the dear fatherland, and for the possibility of service here. It seems to me a great thing to be an American, to be young and strong and free, to have the heart and qualifications to take hold of things, and to make the destiny of my dear country somewhat more glorious and more righteous than it might have been without me. Never a country better deserved a man's passionate love, nor more deeply needed his wise service. Every nation born of time and destiny has failed. At the height of its power it has seemed invincible. Yet every time there has been some poison in the blood that has paralyzed the once-strong hand and unnerved the once-valiant heart. But America is new-born. It occupies a virgin continent. It has not been formed from the wreck of spent dynasties. I find it not grotesque to fancy that the gods themselves are looking down upon our new method of playing out the world game, wondering with bated breath whether

soberly and righteously we will carry America into the power of peace and brotherhood, or whether dissolutely and drunkenly we will plunge her into the ruin of denied humanity, the one abyss which has swallowed every other nation that has ever been and now is not. If America would only see, if she would dash aside the black bandage of selfishness and greed, if she would resolutely put aside the tempter, and know that as long as time itself endures there is but one path to success, the perfect path of love and justice and brotherhood, what might America, my own America, not do! Empires have come and gone, — God's truth endures. There is but one kingdom which is eternal. It is the kingdom of love, and love is that larger term which includes justice and generosity and brotherhood. Fate, destiny, old age, sickness, poverty, crucifixion, death, all the malignant forces of superstition and cruelty cannot prevent the success of the man who follows the method of this kingdom, of the man whose heart is bent on something larger than the assertion of the self, of the man who is unselfish, of the man who loves.

It would be the same with nations.

Margaret and I had been sitting in silence for some time while all these thoughts were running through my head. My eyes were closed.

Margaret leaned over and said very softly, "John, are you asleep?" For answer I opened my eyes very wide and showed her how little sleep there was in them. "Shall I interrupt if I talk to you?"

I laughed at the possibility, — as if Margaret ever could interrupt me, — and answered, "Margaret, you designing one, you want a compliment. You know you never could interrupt, if you tried ever so hard. Talk to me, and the longer the better."

"Perhaps you won't like it so well when you know what I am going to say. I was just wondering, John, whether you were consistent."

I laughed again, and right merrily, — as if any one, man or woman, under the wide canopy of heaven, ever *was* consistent. "I think not, dear heart," I answered. "You know what Emerson says, 'With consistency the great soul has nothing to do.'"

"That 's very good in the abstract, and will do to apply to some one else, but hardly to one's self."

"Tell me, then, just what you mean."

"I was thinking of you and Peyton. You are both of you born aristocrats, if there ever were any."

"Granted, dear lady, and I have never recovered. But what then?"

"Why, this. I was wondering how you make it all square with your democracy, for I know you are sincere in both. How can one be an aristocrat and a socialist at the same time. It does n't seem to me entirely consistent."

"I 'm not half so frightened as I expected to be," I answered gayly. "I was willing to plead guilty to the charge of inconsistency, on general principles. We are all of us more or less inconsistent. But really in this matter I 'm perfectly consistent. I 'm a thor-

oughgoing aristocrat, and can never be anything else as long as the Percyfield blood runs true, a regular conservative in some things, a believer in *noblesse oblige*, a disbeliever in trade, a counter of breeding above everything else in all the world. But so are you, dear Margaret, or you would not be a Ravenel."

"Yes, of course, but I am also the wife of a very hot democrat. Tell me how we can be both at once?".

When Margaret says 'we' in this charming way I am seized with a very strong desire to catch her up in my arms and kiss her. But the officer on the bridge had his eye on us and I was obliged to refrain. "It seems to me this way. To believe in excellence is to be an aristocrat. To believe in it for all people is to be a democrat. There you have it in a nutshell. The older aristocrats wanted all the excellence for themselves, and built walls about it and digged ditches. It was the excellence of privilege. You and I don't want that" —

"Surely not," said Margaret hastily.

— "We want the utmost measure of individual good that we can possibly get. It is the quest to which we have pledged our lives. We call it indeterminate, so as to make it bigger, much bigger, than anything that we can see. I am a modern knight clad in Scotch homespun instead of nasty, clinking mail, and you are a modern gentle, clad, — let me see, — well just as a gentle ought to be. Instead of sitting at home in a high tower, back of a casement window, weeping

your pretty eyes out lest some harm befall Sir Galahad, you go along by his side, and together, sweet comrade, we go to seek the Holy Grail. Is it not so?"

The pressure of Margaret's hand was my answer.

"But we want everybody else to join in the quest and be just as happy as we are, and find life just as great a go. And we want this partly because our hearts are gentle, and God's love is in them, and partly because we see that the path of the quest for ourselves is the path of service. As we are not at all the hermit type of person, — except perhaps on the White Seal, — the greater part of our life is made up of our relations to other people, and to idealize our own lives we must idealize our relations with others. If we did not care about the neighbor for himself, we should still have to care about him and very genuinely, or else miss the Path. Then, too, there is another point. It is this: we breathe the social atmosphere of our time. No man can get much beyond his fellows. However clean we may keep our own house, we are open to contagion if our neighbor lives in filth. Every evil thing that is done in the world lowers the moral tone of the world by just so much, and makes our own lives so much the less ideal. On all sides there are reaction and social solidarity. Salvation to be complete must come to all."

"It is a hard saying, that last," said Margaret, "and yet on the whole, I think I believe it. But what about the neighbor who has n't yet got the ex-

cellence? What becomes of your doctrine of equality?"

"*My* doctrine of equality, my dear," I answered quickly. "*I* never believed such a monstrous lie as equality. I believe, on the contrary, in the most appalling inequality. There are thousands of men better than I am" — "No, there are not," said Margaret, loyally — "There are thousands of men better than I am, and there are millions not so good. I should be a precious hypocrite, if I said otherwise. We are travelers on the same road, the road from nothingness to God, and some have got further on, and some less far. The democracy that starts out with a lie, the lie of calling us all equal, has nothing in common with aristocracy, or, for that matter, with common decency and truthfulness. One might as well go to a horse fair, and maintain that the plough-horses and thoroughbreds were quite equal and must all fetch the same price. In practical matters of horseflesh, the world is not so silly. It knows the value of breeding and it knows the value of the superimposed training. It knows that it takes more than one generation to turn a plough horse into a thoroughbred. It's when we come to theorizing that we get off our head. Democracy as formulated by ignorant doctrinaires is a falsehood from beginning to end. It starts in a lie and ends in a riddle."

"What are you going to do about it?" asked Margaret.

"Well, I'm going to stick to it, for one thing," I

answered, "and I 'm going to try to make it rational and true, for another. Democracy needs the service of educated, temperate, disinterested men."

"And women," adds Margaret. She is now almost as great a stickler for the rights of women as is my dear Charlotte.

"And women, surely," said I. "I meant 'mankind,' when I said 'men,' and had no intention of omitting the supèrior sex."

Margaret chooses to overlook this latitudinarian compliment, and asks seriously, "Have you any programme yet? How are we to begin?"

The officer on the bridge still had his eye on us.

"No definite programme, dear, in the sense of turning things topsy-turvy. Of course we want ultimately to see all land and all necessary industries in the hands of the commonwealth; and we want to see the total conversion and disappearance of the trading class and the trading spirit. But this does not come in a day. Meanwhile we are not disgruntled. The present order of things is not entirely bad. What we shall do at the Château de Monrepos will be to have sweet, human, helpful relations with our neighbors, and try to help on the socializing and humanizing of the world. We may not live to see the entire social programme, even such as we and our Fabian friends know it, carried out in either America or England, but all the same we can be lending a hand to those minor movements which lead in the right direction. That is what I most hope for, that we can be practical helpers-on

of the better day, and not idle on-looking doctrinaires."

"Do you know, dear John, that for an idealist you are a very practical person," said Margaret mischievously.

"For an *idealist*," I cried protestingly. "Do you not know that the most practical people in the world, in fact, the *only* practical people in the world, *are* idealists. The whole fight towards the better life is a fight for better and nobler ideas of life. The obstacles are mental, not brick and stone and wood and metal, but ideas. As soon as men *want* the better day, they can have it, without waiting for any further inventions of Edison's or Tesla's. You know that is so, Margaret. You are just trying to tease me."

"Nearly so, at any rate, John. But I have been evolving a very definite plan of action for Monrepos. Shall I tell it to you? It 's nearly as long as your Kentucky stories, though."

"Go ahead, dear lady," I make answer, "I 'm listening with both my good ear and my game ear."

"Well, it is this," said Margaret, with so much energy that I knew it was something more than a passing thought that I was about to hear. "I call the plan 'the township league.' It begins with the proprietor of Monrepos, a very cultivated and public-spirited gentleman" —

"Thanks! It seems to me that it begins with his wife."

— "It begins at Monrepos," continued Margaret, "and gradually adds each neighboring landowner until it takes in the whole township. The purpose of the league is to make the best out of the township and the people, to carry out indeed the motto of the Château de Monrepos for the whole township. It begins with very practical bread-and-butter problems, such as what crops to raise, how to cultivate the land, how best to dispose of the produce. Then gradually it goes on to more subtle problems, such as beautifying the roads and commons, looking after the schools and churches, and seeing that there are no old people in want. I forgot to say that it would buy the supplies, the best, you know, and the most artistic, and deal only with firms on the white list. Indeed there would be no end to the possible activity of the league. It could be an active Providence in so many ways. It might even provide amusements, get up township balls, and start golf and riding and libraries, and have lectures and concerts. I have thought, too, that we might have good plays" —

"With Mrs. John Percyfield, the Châtelaine of Monrepos, as the leading star. Bravo, I 'm sure it would be a go."

— "And then," continued Margaret, "when we had broken down party and class lines sufficiently, we might take a hand in politics, and send you or some less worthy man to the legislature. Now tell me what you think of *my* programme. Of course the league would include *men*, too."

"I think it 's fine, Margaret, seriously I do, just a splendid idea," I said enthusiastically. "I think we should have to go slowly, especially when we touched on religion and politics. We might, perhaps, get some qualified person to help us, some one who could advise us about crops and markets, and act as purchasing and selling agent for the league. It might be possible to get a graduate in social economy from one of the universities, a big-hearted fellow, who would go in for bettering the whole neighborhood and putting some of his pretty theories into practice. Really, Margaret, I 'm enthusiastic over the idea. It might be the means of lifting the whole township into a higher social life. When did you think of all this?"

Margaret blushed very prettily, and answered more demurely than was her wont. "I thought of it, John, after our talks in the north tower, — while you were deciding whether you loved me or not."

"Margaret, you witch, how is it that you know everything?" I had taken Margaret's hands in mine, — the soldierly officer on the bridge might see us and welcome; the sight would do him good; — "how did you ever know that I was having such a desperately hard time to let my little ladylove grow up?"

Margaret looked into my eyes through those deep, fathomless brown eyes of hers, and said very gently, "You forget, John, that I was loving you all that time. Love makes one very wise;" and then she added, a little archly, "and it was n't so very difficult to see, either, John."

And I made answer, "Sometimes, Margaret, I feel that I don't deserve your love, I was so slow and stupid. But this at least you must know, that however much you may love me, I love you fully *ten* times as much."

"It would be impossible, you great boy," said Margaret. "You don't know yet how deeply a woman *can* love."

I think that Margaret is right. I cannot understand yet how she came to love me, for I do not seem to myself to be lovable. But that is the marvel of it. If any one can teach me, Margaret can, Margaret and my own great love for her.

It was the last day of our voyage. The low Long Island coast came slowly above the horizon as the herald of America. The White Seal had steamed along at such good speed that now she was under increased pressure, so that we might make New York that night. Fire Island Light was passed early enough in the day to set everybody packing up, and to bring the customary apprehensiveness to the stewards about their fees. It was a race with the sun. But October days are short, and the sun beat us. Just as we were steaming into the Narrows, the sunset gun at Fort Hamilton proclaimed that the day was spent, and we had to come to anchor off quarantine and wait for the morning. We were not expected until the following day, so that I knew the dear Charlotte and Frederic would not be uneasy. But it was difficult for me to keep up any show of patience. Margaret and I went

up on the top deck. As I looked towards the city, and saw the lights gleaming from the tall buildings around the Battery, I knew that farther uptown, in one of the many hotels, Charlotte and Frederic were waiting, and the thought of seeing them again made my heart thump riotously.

What a magnificent harbor it is! I do not know how it affects foreigners, but at sunset, and when one has been on the other side of the Atlantic for over a year, it seems the very most beautiful harbor in all the world. It is America. It is home.

Margaret and I did not go down to dinner until very late, and afterwards we hurried back to our favorite perch. The night was mild and beautiful. We drank in great draughts of the sweet air, the air of this fresh western world of hope. The low Staten Island hills passed into the shadow. The sunset glow above the Jersey marshes faded into a clear yellow brilliance. The dainty crescent moon shone pale and clear against its luminous background. From the encircling cities came the twinkle of myriad lights. The lamps on the Brooklyn Bridge made a long flat arch of light, spanning the darkness. A multitude of little boats, with their advisory lights of red and green, darted here and there across the waters. The illuminated signs of the railways on the Jersey shore gave the appearance of permanent bonfires. As the darkness deepened and the giant buildings of Manhattan outlined themselves in light, we seemed to be looking at a city set upon a hill. Nearer at hand, the tireless

right arm of Liberty was holding her torch aloft for all the world to see.

It was a marvelous night, that home-coming of ours, and Margaret and I were profoundly thrilled by it. We sat there in the starlight until very late, not talking, but only breaking the silence occasionally with little exclamations of wonder and delight.

The next morning Margaret and I were up very early. We had had our breakfast and were walking up and down the deck. The inspection at quarantine was over, and they were getting the ship ready to steam up to the city. I noticed a jaunty little yacht making its way towards the White Seal, and giving shrill little whistles by way of notice. There was a great fluttering of handkerchiefs from her tiny deck. I felt a touch of envy for those of our fellow passengers who were to be so promptly welcomed home. Margaret, too, was watching the yacht. She clutched my arm eagerly and cried out, "It 's Charlotte. Oh, John, it 's Charlotte, and that must be Frederic. And there 's Peyton. I don't know the other people."

We were at the ship's side in an instant. What a shout went up from the tiny yacht, and what a shout Margaret and I sent back!

There was the dear Charlotte, a trifle stouter and more matronly than when I left her sixteen months before, but looking just as sweet and pretty as ever. There was Frederic, as proud and handsome as a young father could be, and near at hand, somewhat

frightened by all the uproar, was a very small person in the hands of a large and consequential black nurse. I had never seen this small person before, but I knew, of course, that it must be my morsel of a nephew. Near them stood Peyton. The throb in my heart told me that he was still my little brother, my Endymion. At his side, and already friendly, was the dear musician, the two men whom I love the best in all the world. But the most unexpected of all was my aunt Percyfield, so little severe and such glad affection in her face that I could scarce believe my eyes. She and the very small person seemed to be on very good terms with each other. I looked from one face to the other, quite beside myself with joy. We left Aunt Viney on board to look after our luggage until I should join her at the pier. Our good friend the captain had a convenient stairway let down at the side of the ship, and so Margaret and I passed from the White Seal into the arms of the best and dearest relatives that ever a man had. There was little ceremony, I assure you. In my delight at seeing Charlotte and Peyton and the others, I almost forgot the baby. As a rule I don't like babies. They are ugly, squirming little things. But it does make a difference when they are in the family. This one looked so comically like the dear Charlotte, that quite unbidden, I kissed the morsel on some part of its tiny face, and ultimately made quite as much fuss over it as an uncle is expected to.

How good it was to be with all my people again, to

have Frederic give me his sturdy, cordial handshake, even to have my aunt Percyfield press her birdlike kiss against my cheek. And Charlotte, bless her, put her arms around Margaret and me at the same time, and made our eyes fill with tears at the warmth of her love and her welcome. It was good to see Margaret and Charlotte together, and to have Charlotte call me "Kin" once more. At last I got around to the other gentles, to Peyton and the musician, and it was almost as good to see them together as it was to see Margaret and Charlotte, for they are my two best friends, my friend of the South, and my friend of the North. Peyton is tall and beautiful and distinguished-looking. He must be twenty-six now, but he is still a beautiful boy. He has the same heavenly blue eyes that he used to have, and when I looked into them, I did what I always knew I should do, I put my arms around him and called him "Little brother," and I kissed him on both cheeks, the way the burly Germans do. It was so good of Peyton. He remained North after the Beauregards had left their cottage at York Harbor, just so that he might welcome Margaret and me back to America. The musician is a shy, reserved fellow, but we understand each other. When I pressed his hand and called him "Old fellow," it was as good as a caress. The musician and I have been friends so long that I cannot remember a time when I did not know him. And in all these years we have never had a quarrel, that is, never but once, and then the quarrel was characteristic. It was about the

value of one to the infinite power. One maintained that it was indeterminate and the other that it was unity. But in this matter the musician was all wrong, though he *is* a far better mathematician than I am. He agrees with me, however, about almost everything else, even about my wonderful six-string piano. The ordinary instrument, you remember, has three strings for each note above the bass, and the three strings are tuned in unison. But in my remarkable piano there are six strings for each note, three of the strings being in unison to represent the fundamental, and the other strings sounding the three harmonics, that is, the first octave, the succeeding fifth, and the second octave. I devised this scheme of enriching the notes so that my piano might have more of that human, touching quality that so delights one in the notes of the violin. You may recall that I have had to defer my violin-playing until my next incarnation, for I don't believe that the psychic power of Mademoiselle Werner and the faithful drill of Madame Martigny and the perseveringness of Mr. John Percyfield, all combined, could teach a man, now almost thirty, to play the violin. I shall have to go in for it when I am younger. If you are at all curious about my piano, you can get the effect of a single note by striking the middle C on your own, rather firmly, with your left hand, and at the same instant, but more gently, the next C and G and second C above the middle note with your right hand. You will get a richness of tone quite in excess of the ordinary naked note.

So I floated up to New York on a greater flood than ever swept through Gedney's Channel, on the flood of emotion that overwhelms a man when he comes back to his own country and his own people.

When we got up to the city, I had first to extricate Aunt Viney from the White Seal and pack her off to Philadelphia. Then I had to get our luggage through the custom-house, a process which is ordinarily rather vexatious to the spirit of an out and-out free-trader like myself, and must be somewhat humiliating to those protectionists who descend to lying when the principle is applied to their own small purchases. But yesterday nothing short of a personal mishap to Margaret or to the dear people I had just regained could have touched my high spirits. They seemed to be contagious, too, for the inspector was less impertinent than his office sometimes makes him. After that, we all had luncheon together at the Brevoort House, an old-fashioned place, but quite sacred to us because my grandfather Percyfield used to stop there. In the afternoon we came over to Philadelphia, and the two-hour ride in the comfortable parlor car that got into motion at Jersey City and only came to rest in Broad Street Station was such a delight that it seemed to be just about a quarter of an hour. At the station, all too soon, there was a general scattering. Peyton had to leave us to take his express train for New Orleans. It grieved me to say good-by, after such a short glimpse of this best of friends, but Peyton promised to visit us as soon as ever Monrepos was

ready for its house-warming, and also to see much of us when Margaret and I went to New Orleans later in the winter. The musician took his train out to Chestnut Hill, but he promised to spend next Sunday with us. Otherwise, I think I should have detained him by main force.

Then the rest of us all came out to Uplands. It was quite dark when we reached Green Tree Station, and I could not show Margaret anything of the Chester Valley or of our lovely Pennsylvania fields and woodlands. Pompey was at the station with the old yellow-bellied coach that has been in use as long as I can remember, and both of its lamps were ablaze with importance. It was a part of the Percyfield formality that Margaret should ride in the family coach. My aunt Percyfield and I rode with her, while the more accustomed members of the family had to put up with the lumbering hack which had been bespoken at the livery. A cart full of luggage completed the procession. This was only last night, but it seems a week, even a month ago, for when you first come home time seems to loiter in order that you may crowd into it all the new and delightful impressions which constitute the joy of coming home. Or is it that time has no fixed content and is measured only by what you put into it. After our Bohemian life in Europe, Margaret and I were curiously conscious of the old-time atmosphere about my aunt Percyfield and the provincial formality of our first hours at Uplands. We liked the flavor of it, but we had to get used to it. Although it was too

dark for me to show Margaret our part of Pennsylvania, there was no such hindrance when we came to Uplands. The house was ablaze with light from the front door to the garret. Flowers were everywhere. The best of the family silver and china adorned the dinner table. Uplands was at its bravest. It was the Percyfield welcome to a beloved bride.

Margaret and I had not expected this, and we were much touched by it, though I thought at once that I might have known that Charlotte would have it so. But when I asked Charlotte about it, she said that it was all my aunt Percyfield's doing and that she herself was as much surprised and gratified as we were. There was indeed an air of suppressed excitement about my aunt Percyfield that quite baffled me. I had never known her to be so affectionate. Though she had never seen Margaret before, she quite vied with Charlotte in trying to make my dear bride feel entirely at home.

The dinner was a delicious affair. For democrats we had what might have seemed to our Fabian friends an undue amount of service, but it would have been simple cruelty to have kept either Pompey or Susan or Aunt Viney out of the dining-room. They shared the Percyfield joy. When at last the dinner was over, and these faithful old servants of ours had been forcibly driven out of the room by a touch of my aunt Percyfield's old-time severity, the cause of her own excitement was gently and modestly disclosed to us. It was a great thing that my aunt Percyfield did last

night, a very great kindness, and quite worthy of the blood which made my grandfather Percyfield the most courteous and generous of men, — my old kinswoman has given Uplands to Margaret and to me, and she brought us out here not as her guests, but to our own home.

I have been in possession for a day, but still I hardly realize the truth of it all. This dear old place, where I was born, where I have always lived, which is sacred to me through a thousand memories of my mother and my grandfather Percyfield, is our very own, Margaret's and mine. It is to be the home of my manhood, the home where Margaret and I are to work out the problem of our individual and social life, the home where our children are to be born and nurtured. It seemed too great a gift. I hesitated to accept it. But Charlotte, too, and Frederic, both wish it. They must needs spend the greater part of the year in town, as Frederic's profession demands it. So they joined my aunt Percyfield in overcoming all my scruples. They tell me that a John Percyfield has always been master at Uplands, and that so honorable a tradition must not be set aside. And much else these dear, unselfish people tell me to reconcile me to this great happiness. My aunt Percyfield simply declines to hear of anything else. She says that Monrepos is an outlandish name, and that Hereford Hall and Marston Manor are not much better. She had given me small chance to refuse, for she took the precaution to buy herself a small house over near St.

Davids, and her modest establishment is already under way. She says that Uplands is too large a place for an old woman to keep up properly and that she will be much happier to see Margaret and me here, and our children, and that already she is much attached to her little place over at St. Davids. But in spite of all this brave show, I know that it has cost my aunt Percyfield something dear to give up Uplands.

When I had a chance, I asked Charlotte privately what had come over my aunt Percyfield, if she is ill and likely to die, for my aunt Percyfield was formerly a severe and not altogether agreeable old gentlewoman, and I cannot understand the change. Charlotte answered gravely that it was the baby who had brought about the change, and that my aunt Percyfield had been quite a different woman since the baby came and much more like my grandfather Percyfield. I guess Charlotte saw the twinkle in my eye at this astounding piece of information, for she added almost reproachfully, "Other people say the same thing, John."

The conceit of these young mothers passes all belief. But it was too good to be with Charlotte again to do any immediate teasing, and very naturally we spoke of Margaret; this is a perfectly safe subject, for one cannot fall into the superlative. Charlotte was enthusiastic enough to satisfy even me. She put her arms around me and said, "Kin dear, what a lovely sister you have brought us. I shall love Margaret almost as much as I love you, you dear old fellow. I

wish that mother and grandfather Percyfield could know." I resolved then and there to praise the baby as much as I honestly could. Charlotte is just the dearest sister in the world. Just then a feeble wail reached our ears. Charlotte was off in a flash to look after her small son, and I went to seek my aunt Percyfield and to try to tell her what was in my heart.

This morning, Charlotte and Frederic and the small boy and the large nurse all went into town, and my aunt Percyfield drove back to St. Davids. They have all promised to come for dinner on Sunday, the small boy giving his assent by a gurgling noise intelligible only to the devoted Charlotte.

And Margaret and I are alone at Uplands. We have not even had our trunks unpacked. We have done nothing that sober-minded householders ought to do. We have been two children again, and have spent the time wandering over this dear old home of my ancestors, this still dearer home of Margaret's and mine. It has been a perfect October day. The Chester Valley is more beautiful even than I remembered it. It has the glory of the autumn upon it, and brooding over all the fields and woods and farmhouses there is the full richness and peace of accomplished work. Margaret and I have been into every field in our large domain and have loitered along the paths in the chestnut woods that I know so well. We have followed the little stream to its source high on the hill, the little stream that gives us such a plentiful supply of good soft water at the Uplands manor-house

and barns. We have explored the garden together, and have visited all the animals. Indoors, we have been into every room and cupboard in the house. We have watched the sunset from the western porch. And now it is the gloaming, and our first day at home in America is spent.

Pompey has made us a generous fire in the large living-hall. Margaret and I are sitting before the fire on the old settle where my mother used to tell me stories of angels and knights. Margaret rests her head against my shoulder, and the sweet-smelling chestnut hair brushes against my face. In my arms, I have the angel and at her side I mean that there shall always be the knight. Margaret puts her arms around me, and clings to me with that yearning tenderness which always makes my heart so full. Then she whispers to me, "John, how good God has been to us."

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JOHN PERCYFIELD

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